NOTABLE SHORT STORIES OF TODAY

Edited by

EDWIN VAN B. KNICKERBOCKER

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Edited by

EDWIN VAN B. KNICKERBOCKER

CHAIRMAN, DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
THE GEORGE WASHINGTON HIGH SCHOOL
NEW YORK CITY

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INTRODUCTION

A SHORT STORY COLLECTION for use in American schools must almost necessarily be limited to stories originally written in English. Aside from any other consideration, the matter of the size of a school textbook would make the restriction imperative. It is difficult to choose eighteen or twenty stories that will represent the best work of American and British writers; it is quite out of the question that so small a number could be representative of the best work of the world.

Indeed, a school collection must almost necessarily be limited to one definite period in the history of American and British short story writing—preferably the present. The work of Irving, Hawthorne, Poe, Fitz-James O'Brien, N. P. Willis, Rose Terry Cooke, and Bret Harte is interesting historically, and some of it is interesting in itself; but it cannot be included unless the purpose of the collection is to present the development of the modern short story.

Even the writers of yesterday must be excluded if the collection is to be representative in its necessarily small compass. For this reason Stevenson, Mark Twain, and Kipling (whose best work belongs to yesterday, though he still writes occasionally) are not represented in the present volume. O. Henry, it seems to the editor, should be the earliest writer to be included, both because he provides a convenient time limit and because his influence is evident in present-day short story writing. Since O. Henry, so many stars have shone in the short story sky that selection is not a simple matter. But the editor is satisfied that he has done what he set out to do, which is to present a collection that shall genuinely represent the best short stories which have appeared in America and Great Britain since O. Henry became famous.

One element in the selection gave the editor pause. Might his

choice in any instance depend upon the degree of fame enjoyed by the writer rather than upon the intrinsic worth of the story? He believes he has properly decided in the negative. In the editor's opinion the American short story is decidedly superior to that produced in Great Britain—with occasional notable exceptions. He would have liked to include Katharine Mansfield, John Galsworthy, John Masefield, Arnold Bennett, and Hugh Walpole. But great as these writers are, their short story product seems to fall plainly below the best American standards. Galsworthy's *The Apple-tree* and *The First and the Last* are beautiful and moving stories, but they are not *short* stories as the term must in all reason be defined. Most of Galsworthy's shorter pieces are obviously sketches and not properly short stories, and the same is true of practically all of Katharine Mansfield's work. The present collection includes stories by three English writers—Conrad, W. W. Jacobs, and Stacy Aumonier,—and the editor is confident that if these men were quite unknown, the three stories selected from their work would be given first rank by the great majority of discriminating readers.

A study of short stories should provide the student with exercises in critical analysis. But it should do something else as well, which is more important: it should enhance his enjoyment of well-written stories and tend to make him dissatisfied with inferior work. Our appreciation of music is heightened by an understanding of the principles of musical composition and execution. Our enjoyment of painting is increased by a knowledge of principles of form, of mass, and of color value. In any field of artistic endeavor a grasp of technique will increase our ability to see excellences in genuine artistry and shortcomings in poor workmanship. The stories in this book are offered as examples of the best work that is being done in the short story field. For the high school student, a mere reading of the stories ought to result, to some extent, in giving him models of short story excellence; but a study of them should provide him with a definite basis for an intelligent appreciation of whatever good stories he may read in future, and enable him at the

same time to realize the faults in work that does not meet reasonable standards.

The arrangement of the contents of this volume is not quite that of most school collections. The stories themselves constitute Part I, where they appear without comment. In Part II there is a discussion of short story characteristics and certain matters of fundamental short story technique; this is followed by specific *Notes and Questions* upon each of the stories. Part III consists of an appendix, which includes a brief chapter offering suggestions for the writing of short stories by students, a rapid sketch of the short story in America, and a group of short story reading lists.

The editor wishes to express his thanks to the authors, publishers, and literary agents whose permission made possible his use of the stories in the collection. For helpful advice and suggestions he is under obligation to Mr. Edwin A. Kane, Chairman of the Speech Department in the George Washington High School, and Miss Edith N. Grout of the high school Library. He is indebted to Miss Dorothy McElhone and Miss Margaret Stevens, two of the students, for help in various ways.

Part One

THE STORIES

GOLD-MOUNTED GUNS

By

F. R. BUCKLEY

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GOLD-MOUNTED GUNS is a model example of what has come to be known as a *short short-story*. It won for Mr. Buckley the 1922 O. Henry Memorial Prize awarded by the Society of Arts and Sciences for the best story of this type.

FREDERIC ROBERT WAKELIN-BUCKLEY (F. R. Buckley) was born in the north of Ireland and educated in England. For some years he has made his home in the United States. He was formerly a newspaper man, and worked subsequently, in various emergencies, as a manual laborer, a scenario writer, and a motion-picture actor; but for the last eight years he has devoted himself entirely to writing fiction.

Two of his novels—*The Sage Hen* and *The Way of Sinners*—have been published in the United States; and two—*Joan of the Ranch* and *Billy Van*,—as well as two books of short stories, have appeared in England. Lately Mr. Buckley has been doing a series of brilliant adventure stories with a setting in the Middle Ages. His Luigi Caradosso, a swashbuckling Italian captain of mercenaries, is a distinct contribution to romantic fiction.

The theory behind this author's work is exemplified in *Gold-Mounted Guns* and, at greater length in his latest novel, *The Way of Sinners*: he seeks to deal with modern problems in terms of adventure and exotic setting.

GOLD-MOUNTED GUNS

By F. R. Buckley

EVENING had fallen on Longhorn City, and already, to the south, an eager star was twinkling in the velvet sky, when a spare, hard-faced man slouched down the main street and selected a pony from the dozen hitched beside Tim Geogehan's general store. The town, which in the daytime suffered from an excess of eye-searing light in its open spaces, confined its efforts at artificial lighting to the one store, the one saloon, and its neighbor, the Temple of Chance; so it was from a dusky void that the hard-faced man heard himself called by name.

"Tommy!" a subdued voice accosted him.

The hard-faced man made, it seemed, a very slight movement —a mere flick of the hand at his low-slung belt; but it was a movement perfectly appraised by the man in the shadows.

"Wait a minute!" the voice pleaded.

A moment later, his hands upraised, his pony's bridle-reins caught in the crook of one arm, a young man moved into the zone of light that shone bravely out through Tim Geogehan's back window.

"Don't shoot," he said, trying to control his nervousness before the weapon unwaveringly trained upon him. "I'm—a friend."

For perhaps fifteen seconds the newcomer and the hard-faced man examined each other with the unwinking scrutiny of those who take chances of life and death. The younger, with that lightning draw fresh in his mind, noted the sinister droop of a gray moustache over a hidden mouth, and shivered a little as his gaze met that of a pair of steel-blue eyes. The man with the gun saw before him a rather handsome face, marred, even in this moment of submission, by a certain desperation.

"What do you want?" he asked, tersely.

"Can I put my hands down?" countered the other.

The lean man considered.

"All things bein' equal," he said, "I think I'd rather you'd first tell me how you got round to callin' me Tommy. Been askin' people in the street?"

"No," said the boy. "I only got into town this afternoon, an' I ain't a fool anyway. I seen you ride in this afternoon, and the way folks backed away from you made me wonder who you was. Then I seen them gold-mounted guns of yourn, an' of course I knew. Nobody ever had guns like them but Pecos Tommy. I could ha' shot you while you was gettin' your horse, if I'd been that way inclined."

The lean man bit his moustache.

"Put 'em down. What do you want?"

"I want to join you."

"You want to *what?*"

"Yeah, I know it sounds foolish to you, mebbe," said the young man. "But, listen—your side-kicker's in jail down in Rosewell. I figured I could take his place—anyway, till he got out. I know I ain't got any record, but I can ride, an' I can shoot the pips out of a ten-spot at ten paces, an'—I got a little job to bring into the firm, to start with."

The lean man's gaze narrowed.

"Have, eh?" he asked, softly.

"It ain't anythin' like you go in for as a rule," said the boy, apologetically, "but it's a roll of cash an'—I guess it'll show you I'm straight. I only got on to it this afternoon. Kind of providential I should meet you right now."

The lean man chewed his moustache. His eyes did not shift.

"Yeah," he said, slowly. "What you quittin' punchin' for?"

"Sick of it."

"Figurin' robbin' trains is easier money?"

"No," said the young man, "I ain't. But I like a little spice in life. They ain't none in punchin'."

"Got a girl?" asked the lean man.

The boy shook his head. The hard-faced man nodded reflectively.

"Well, what's the job?" he asked.

The light from Geogehan's window was cut off by the body of a man who, cupping his hands about his eyes, stared out into the night, as if to locate the buzz of voices at the back of the store.

"If you're goin' to take me on," said the young man, "I can tell you while we're ridin' toward it. If you ain't—why, there's no need to go no further."

The elder slipped back into its holster the gold-mounted gun he had drawn, glanced once at the obscured window and again, piercingly, at the boy whose face now showed white in the light of the rising moon. Then he turned his pony and mounted.

"Come on," he commanded.

Five minutes later the two had passed the limits of the town, heading for the low range of hills which encircled it to the south —and Will Arblaster had given the details of his job to the unemotional man at his side.

"How do you know the old guy's got the money?" came a level question.

"I saw him come out of the bank this afternoon, grinnin' all over his face an' stuffin' it into his pants-pocket," said the boy. "An' when he was gone, I kind of inquired who he was. His name's Sanderson, an' he lives in this yer cabin right ahead a mile. Looked kind of a soft old geezer—kind that'd give up without any trouble. Must ha' been quite some cash there, judgin' by the size of the roll. But I guess when *you* ask him for it, he won't mind lettin' it go."

"I ain't goin' to ask him," said the lean man. "This is your job."

The boy hesitated.

"Well, if I do it right," he asked, with a trace of tremor in his voice, "will you take me along with you sure?"

"Yeah—I'll take you along."

The two ponies rounded a shoulder of the hill: before the riders

there loomed, in the moonlight, the dark shape of a cabin, its windows unlighted. The lean man chuckled.

"He's out."

Will Arblaster swung off his horse.

"Maybe," he said, "but likely the money ain't. He started off home, an' if he's had to go out again, likely he's hid the money some place. Folks know *you're* about. I'm goin' to see."

Stealthily he crept toward the house. The moon went behind a cloud-bank, and the darkness swallowed him. The lean man, sitting his horse, motionless, heard the rap of knuckles on the door—then a pause, and the rattle of the latch. A moment later came the heavy thud of a shoulder against wood—a cracking sound, and a crash as the door went down. The lean man's lips tightened. From within the cabin came the noise of one stumbling over furniture, then the fitful fire of a match illumined the windows. In the quiet, out there in the night, the man on the horse, twenty yards away, could hear the clumping of the other's boots on the rough board floor, and every rustle of the papers that he fumbled in his search. Another match scratched and sputtered, and then, with a hoarse cry of triumph, was flung down. Running feet padded across the short grass and Will Arblaster drew up, panting.

"Got it!" he gasped. "The old fool! Put it in a tea-canister right on the mantelshelf. Enough to choke a horse! Feel it!"

The lean man, unemotional as ever, reached down and took the roll of money.

"Got another match?" he asked.

Willie struck one, and, panting, watched while his companion, moistening a thumb, ruffled through the bills.

"Fifty tens," said the lean man. "Five hundred dollars. Guess I'll carry it."

His cold blue eyes turned downward, and focused again with piercing attention on the younger man's upturned face. The bills were stowed in a pocket of the belt right next one of those gold-mounted guns which, earlier in the evening, had covered Willie

Arblaster's heart. For a moment, the lean man's hand seemed to hesitate over its butt; then, as Willie smiled and nodded, it moved away. The match burned out.

"Let's get out of here," the younger urged; whereupon the hand which had hovered over the gun-butt grasped Will Arblaster's shoulder.

"No, not yet," he said quietly, "not just yet. Get on your hawss, an' set still awhile."

The young man mounted. "What's the idea?"

"Why!" said the level voice at his right. "This is a kind of novelty to me. Robbin' trains, you ain't got any chance to see results, like: this here's different. Figure this old guy'll be back pretty soon. I'd like to see what he does when he finds his wad's gone. Ought to be amusin'!"

Arblaster chuckled uncertainly.

"Ain't he liable to——"

"He can't see us," said the lean man with a certain new cheerfulness in his tone. "An' besides, he'll think we'd naturally be miles away; an' besides that, we're mounted, all ready."

"What's that?" whispered the young man, laying a hand on his companion's arm.

The other listened.

"Probably him," he said. "Now stay still."

There were two riders—by their voices, a man and a girl: they were laughing as they approached the rear of the house, where, roughly made of old boards, stood Pa Sanderson's substitute for a stable. They put up the horses; then their words came clearer to the ears of the listeners, as they turned the corner of the building, walking toward the front door.

"I feel mean about it, anyhow," said the girl's voice. "You going on living here, Daddy, while——"

"Tut-tut-tut!" said the old man. "What's five hundred to me? I ain't never had that much in a lump, an' shouldn't know what to do with it if I had. 'Sides, your Aunt Elviry didn't give it you for nothin'. 'If she wants to go to college,' says she, 'let her prove

it by workin'. I'll pay half, but she's got to pay t'other half.' Well, you worked, an' —— Where on earth did I put that key?"

There was a silence, broken by the grunts of the old man as he contorted himself in the search of his pockets: and then the girl spoke: the tone of her voice was the more terrible for the restraint she was putting on it.

"Daddy—the—the—did you leave the money in the house?"

"Yes. What is it?" cried the old man.

"Daddy—the door's broken down, and ——"

There was a hoarse cry: boot-heels stumbled across the boards, and again a match flared. Its pale light showed a girl standing in the doorway of the cabin, her hands clasped on her bosom—while beyond the wreckage of the door a bent figure with silver hair tottered away from the mantelshelf. In one hand Pa Sanderson held the flickering match, in the other a tin box.

"Gone!" he cried in his cracked voice. "Gone!"

Willie Arblaster drew a breath through his teeth and moved uneasily in his saddle. Instantly a lean, strong hand, with a grip like steel, fell on his wrist and grasped it. The man behind the hand chuckled.

"Listen!" he said.

"Daddy—Daddy—don't take on so—please don't," came the girl's voice, itself trembling with repressed tears. There was a scrape of chair-legs on the floor as she forced the old man into his seat by the fireplace. He hunched there, his face in his hands, while she struck a match and laid the flame to the wick of the lamp on the table. As it burned up she went back to her father, knelt by him, and threw her arms about his neck.

"Now, now, now!" she pleaded. "Now, Daddy, it's all right. Don't take on so. It's all right."

But he would not be comforted.

"I can't replace it!" cried Pa Sanderson, dropping trembling hands from his face. "It's gone! Two years you've been away from me; two years you've slaved in a store; and now I've ——"

"Hush, hush!" the girl begged. "Now, Daddy—it's all right. I can go on working, and ——"

With a convulsive effort, the old man got to his feet. "Two years more slavery, while some skunk drinks your money, gambles it—throws it away!" he cried. "Curse him! Whoever it is, curse him! Where's God's justice? What's a man goin' to believe when years of scrapin' like your aunt done, an' years of slavin' like yours in Laredo there, an' all our happiness to-day can be wiped out by a damned thief in a minute?"

The girl put her little hand over her father's mouth.

"Don't, Daddy," she choked. "It only makes it worse. Come and lie down on your bed, and I'll make you some coffee. Don't cry, Daddy darling. Please."

Gently, like a mother with a little child, she led the heart-broken old man out of the watchers' line of vision, out of the circle of lamplight. More faintly, but still with heartrending distinctness, the listeners could hear the sounds of weeping.

The lean man sniffed, chuckled, and pulled his bridle.

"Some circus!" he said appreciatively. "C'mon, boy."

His horse moved a few paces, but Will Arblaster's did not. The lean man turned in his saddle.

"Ain't you comin'?" he asked.

For ten seconds, perhaps, the boy made no answer. Then he urged his pony forward until it stood side by side with his companion's.

"No," he said. "An'—an' I ain't goin' to take that money, neither."

"Huh?"

The voice was slow and meditative.

"Don't know as ever I figured what this game meant," he said. "Always seemed to me that all the hardships was on the stick-up man's side—gettin' shot at an' chased and so on. Kind of fun, at that. Never thought 'bout—old men cryin'."

"That ain't my fault," said the lean man.

"No," said Will Arblaster, still very slowly. "But I'm goin' to take that money back. You didn't have no trouble gettin' it, so you don't lose nothin'."

"Suppose I say I won't let go of it?" suggested the lean man with a sneer.

"Then," snarled Arblaster, "I'll blow your damned head off an' take it! Don't you move, you! I've got you covered. I'll take the money out myself."

His revolver muzzle under his companion's nose, he snapped open the pocket of the belt and extracted the roll of bills. Then, regardless of a possible shot in the back, he swung off his horse and shambled, with the mincing gait of the born horseman, into the lighted doorway of the cabin. The lean man, unemotional as ever, sat perfectly still, looking alternately at the cloud-dappled sky and at the cabin, from which now came a murmur of voices harmonizing with a strange effect of joy, to the half-heard bass of the night-wind.

It was a full ten minutes before Will Arblaster reappeared in the doorway alone, and made, while silhouetted against the light, a quick movement of his hand across his eyes, then stumbled forward through the darkness toward his horse. Still the lean man did not move.

"I'm—sorry," said the boy as he mounted. "But——"

"I ain't," said the lean man quietly. "What do you think I made you stay an' watch for, you young fool?"

The boy made no reply. Suddenly the hair prickled on the back of his neck and his jaw fell.

"Say," he demanded hoarsely at last. "Ain't you Pecos Tommy?"

The lean man's answer was a short laugh.

"But you got his guns, an' the people in Longhorn all kind of fell back!" the boy cried. "If you ain't him, who are you?"

The moon had drifted from behind a cloud and flung a ray of light across the face of the lean man as he turned it, narrow-eyed, toward Arblaster. The pallid light picked out with terrible dis-

tinctness the grim lines of that face—emphasized the cluster of sun-wrinkles about the corners of the piercing eyes and marked as if with underscoring black lines the long sweep of the fighting jaw.

"Why," said the lean man dryly, "I'm the sheriff that killed him yesterday. Let's be ridin' back."

ENGLAND TO AMERICA

By

MARGARET PRESCOTT MONTAGUE

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ENGLAND TO AMERICA appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly* a little less than a year after the armistice put a stop to hostilities in the Great War. It won the O. Henry Memorial Prize of Five Hundred Dollars for the best short story to be published during the year. Later Doubleday, Page and Company brought the story out by itself, as a small book.

MARGARET PRESCOTT MONTAGUE is a native of West Virginia and has always lived in the South. She was born at White Sulphur Springs and was educated at home and in private schools.

As a short story writer and essayist Miss Montague has won a reputation both for the imaginative quality of her work and for her style. Her *Closed Doors,* a collection of stories of deaf or blind children, has been used as a text on the subject at Harvard University. Her latest book, *Up Eel River,* is a collection of stories dealing with Tom Beaver, a myth-character of the West Virginia lumber camps.

ENGLAND TO AMERICA

By Margaret Prescott Montague

"LORD, but English people are funny!"

This was the perplexed mental ejaculation that young Lieutenant Skipworth Cary, of Virginia, found his thoughts constantly reiterating during his stay in Devonshire. Had he been, he wondered, a confiding fool, to accept so trustingly Chev Sherwood's suggestion that he spend a part of his leave, at least, at Bishopsthorpe, where Chev's people lived? But why should he have anticipated any difficulty here, in this very corner of England which had bred his own ancestors, when he had always hit it off so splendidly with his English comrades at the Front? Here, however, though they were all awfully kind,—at least, he was sure they meant to be kind,—something was always bringing him up short: something that he could not lay hold of, but which made him feel like a blind man groping in a strange place, or worse, like a bull in a china-shop. He was prepared enough to find differences in the American and English points of view. But this thing that baffled him did not seem to have to do with that; it was something deeper, something very definite, he was sure—and yet, what was it? The worst of it was that he had a curious feeling as if they were all—that is, Lady Sherwood and Gerald; not Sir Charles so much—protecting him from himself—keeping him from making breaks, as he phrased it. That hurt and annoyed him, and piqued his vanity. Was he a social blunderer, and weren't a Virginia gentleman's manners to be trusted in England without leading-strings?

He had been at the Front for several months with the Royal Flying Corps, and when his leave came, his Flight Commander, Captain Cheviot Sherwood, discovering that he meant to spend it in England, where he hardly knew a soul, had said his people down

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in Devonshire would be jolly glad to have him stop with them; and Skipworth Cary, knowing that, if the circumstances had been reversed, his people down in Virginia would indeed have been jolly glad to entertain Captain Sherwood, had accepted unhesitatingly. The invitation had been seconded by a letter from Lady Sherwood,—Chev's mother,—and after a few days' sight-seeing in London, he had come down to Bishopsthorpe, very eager to know his friend's family, feeling as he did about Chev himself. "He's the finest man that ever went up in the air," he had written home; and to his own family's disgust, his letters had been far more full of Chev Sherwood than they had been of Skipworth Cary.

And now here he was, and he almost wished himself away—wished almost that he was back again at the Front, carrying on under Chev. There, at least, you knew what you were up against. The job might be hard enough, but it wasn't baffling and queer, with hidden undercurrents that you couldn't chart. It seemed to him that this baffling feeling of constraint had rushed to meet him on the very threshold of the drawing-room, when he made his first appearance.

As he entered, he had a sudden sensation that they had been awaiting him in a strained expectancy, and that, as he appeared, they adjusted unseen masks and began to play-act at something. "But English people don't play-act very well," he commented to himself, reviewing the scene afterward.

Lady Sherwood had come forward and greeted him in a manner which would have been pleasant enough, if he had not, with quick sensitiveness, felt it to be forced. But perhaps that was English stiffness.

Then she had turned to her husband, who was standing staring into the fireplace, although, as it was June, there was no fire there to stare at.

"Charles," she said, "here is Lieutenant Cary"; and her voice had a certain note in it which at home Cary and his sister Nancy were in the habit of designating "mother-making-dad-mind-his-manners."

At her words the old man—and Cary was startled to see how old and broken he was—turned round and held out his hand. "How d'you do?" he said jerkily, "how d'you do?" and then turned abruptly back again to the fireplace.

"Hello! What's up! The old boy doesn't like me!" was Cary's quick, startled comment to himself.

He was so surprised by the look the other bent upon him that he involuntarily glanced across to a long mirror to see if there was anything wrong with his uniform. But no, that appeared to be all right. It was himself, then—or his country; perhaps the old sport didn't fall for Americans.

"And here is Gerald," Lady Sherwood went on in her low remote voice, which somehow made the Virginian feel very far away.

It was with genuine pleasure, though with some surprise, that he turned to greet Gerald Sherwood, Chev's younger brother, who had been, tradition in the corps said, as gallant and daring a flyer as Chev himself, until he got his in the face five months ago.

"I'm mighty glad to meet you," he said eagerly, in his pleasant, muffled Southern voice, grasping the hand the other stretched out, and looking with deep respect at the scarred face and sightless eyes.

Gerald laughed a little, but it was a pleasant laugh, and his handclasp was friendly.

"That's real American, isn't it?" he said. "I ought to have remembered and said it first. Sorry."

Skipworth laughed too. "Well," he conceded, "we generally are glad to meet people in my country, and we don't care who says it first. But," he added, "I didn't think I'd have the luck to find you here."

He remembered that Chev had regretted that he probably wouldn't see Gerald, as the latter was at St. Dunstan's, where they were re-educating the blinded soldiers.

The other hesitated a moment, and then said rather awkwardly, "Oh, I'm just home for a little while; I only got here this morning, in fact."

Skipworth noted the hesitation. Did the old people get panicky at the thought of entertaining a wild man from Virginia, and send an S O S for Gerald, he wondered.

"We are so glad you could come to us," Lady Sherwood said rather hastily just then. And again he could not fail to note that she was prompting her husband.

The latter reluctantly turned round, and said, "Yes, yes, quite so. Welcome to Bishopsthorpe, my boy," as if his wife had pulled a string, and he responded mechanically, without quite knowing what he said. Then, as his eyes rested a moment on his guest, he looked as if he would like to bolt out of the room. He controlled himself, however, and, jerking round again to the fireplace, went on murmuring, "Yes, yes, yes," vaguely—just like the dormouse at the Mad Tea-Party, who went to sleep, saying, "Twinkle, twinkle, twinkle," Cary could not help thinking to himself.

But after all, it wasn't really funny, it was pathetic. Gosh, how doddering the poor old boy was! Skipworth wondered, with a sudden twist at his heart, if the war was playing the deuce with his home people, too. Was his own father going to pieces like this, and had his mother's gay vivacity fallen into that still remoteness of Lady Sherwood's? But of course not! The Carys hadn't suffered as the poor Sherwoods had, with their youngest son, Curtin, killed early in the war, and now Gerald knocked out so tragically. Lord, he thought, how they must all bank on Chev! And of course they would want to hear at once about him. "I left Chev as fit as anything, and he sent all sorts of messages," he reported, thinking it more discreet to deliver Chev's messages thus vaguely than to repeat his actual carefree remark, which had been, "Oh, tell 'em I'm jolly as a tick."

But evidently there was something wrong with the words as they were, for instantly he was aware of the curious sense of withdrawal on their part. Hastily reviewing them, he decided that they had sounded too familiar from a stranger and a younger man like himself. He supposed he ought not to have spoken of Chev by his first

name. Gee, what sticklers they were! Wouldn't his family—dad and mother and Nancy—have fairly lapped up any messages from him, even if they had been delivered a bit awkwardly? However, he added, as a concession to their point of view, "But, of course, you'll have had later news of Captain Sherwood."

To which, after a pause, Lady Sherwood responded, "Oh, yes," in that remote and colourless voice which might have meant anything or nothing.

At this point dinner was announced.

Lady Sherwood drew her husband away from the empty fireplace, and Gerald slipped his arm through the Virginian's, saying pleasantly, "I'm learning to carry on fairly well at St. Dunstan's, but I confess I still like to have a pilot."

To look at the tall young fellow beside him, whose scarred face was so reminiscent of Chev's untouched good looks, who had known all the immense freedom of the air, but who was now learning to carry on in the dark, moved Skipworth Cary to generous homage.

"You know my saying I'm glad to meet you isn't just American," he said half shyly, but warmly. "It's plain English, and the straight truth. I've wanted to meet you awfully. The oldsters are always holding up your glorious exploits to us newcomers. Withers never gets tired telling about that fight of yours with the four enemy planes. And besides," he rushed on eagerly, "I'm glad to have a chance to tell Chev's brother—Captain Sherwood's brother, I mean—what I think of him. Only as a matter of fact, I can't," he broke off with a laugh. "I can't put it exactly into words, but I tell you I'd follow that man straight into hell and out the other side—or go there alone if he told me to. He is the finest chap that ever flew."

And then he felt as if a cold douche had been flung in his face, for after a moment's pause, the other returned, "That's awfully good of you," in a voice so distant and formal that the Virginian could have kicked himself. What an ass he was to be so darned enthusiastic with an Englishman! He supposed it was bad form to show any

pleasure over praise of a member of your family. Lord, if Chev got the V. C., he reckoned it would be awful to speak of it. Still, you would have thought Gerald might have stood for a little praise of him. But then, glancing sideways at his companion, he surprised on his face a look so strange and suffering that it came to him almost violently what it must be never to fly again; to be on the threshold of life, with endless days of blackness ahead. Good God! How cruel he had been to flaunt Chev in his face! In remorseful and hasty reparation he stumbled on, "But the old fellows are always having great discussions as to which was the best—you or your brother. Withers always maintains you were."

"Withers lies, then!" the other retorted. "I never touched Chev—never came within a mile of him, and never could have."

They reached the dinner-table with that, and young Cary found himself bewildered and uncomfortable. If Gerald hadn't liked praise of Chev, he had liked praise of himself even less, it seemed.

Dinner was not a success. The Virginian found that, if there was to be conversation, the burden of carrying it on was upon him, and gosh! they don't mind silences in this man's island, do they? he commented desperately to himself, thinking how different it was from America. Why, there they acted as if silence was an egg that had just been laid, and everyone had to cackle at once to cover it up. But here the talk constantly fell to the ground, and nobody but himself seemed concerned to pick it up. His attempt to praise Chev had not been successful, and he could understand their not wanting to hear about flying and the war before Gerald.

So at last, in desperation, he wandered off into descriptions of America, finding to his relief, that he had struck the right note at last. They were glad to hear about the States, and Lady Sherwood inquired politely if the Indians still gave them much trouble; and when he assured her that in Virginia, except for the Pocahontas tribe, they were all pretty well subdued, she accepted his statement with complete innocency. And he was so delighted to find at last a subject to which they were evidently cordial, that he was quite

carried away, and wound up by inviting them all to visit his family in Richmond, as soon as the war was over.

Gerald accepted at once, with enthusiasm; Lady Sherwood made polite murmurs, smiling at him in quite a warm and almost, indeed, maternal manner. Even Sir Charles, who had been staring at the food on his plate as if he did not quite know what to make of it, came to the surface long enough to mumble, "Yes, yes, very good idea. Countries must carry on together—what?"

But that was the only hit of the whole evening, and when the Virginian retired to his room, as he made an excuse to do early, he was so confused and depressed that he fell into an acute attack of homesickness.

Heavens, he thought, as he tumbled into bed, just suppose, now, this was little old Richmond, Virginia, U. S. A., instead of being Bishopsthorpe, Avery Cross near Wick, and all the rest of it! And at that, he grinned to himself. England wasn't such an all-fired big country that you'd think they'd have to ticket themselves with addresses a yard long, for fear they'd get lost—now, would you? Well, anyway, suppose it was Richmond, and his train just pulling into the Byrd Street Station. He stretched out luxuriously, and let his mind picture the whole familiar scene. The wind was blowing right, so there was the mellow homely smell of tobacco in the streets, and plenty of people all along the way to hail him with outstretched hands and shouts of "Hey, Skip Cary, when did you get back?" "Welcome home, my boy!" "Well, will you *look* what the cat dragged in!" And so he came to his own front door-step, and, walking straight in, surprised the whole family at breakfast; and yes—doggone it! if it wasn't Sunday, and they having waffles! And after that his obliging fancy bore him up Franklin Street, through Monroe Park, and so to Miss Sally Berkeley's door. He was sound asleep before he reached it, but in his dreams, light as a little bird, she came flying down the broad stairway to meet him, and ——

But when he waked next morning, he did not find himself in Virginia, but in Devonshire, where, to his unbounded embarrass-

ment, a white housemaid was putting up his curtains and whispering something about his bath. And though he pretended profound slumber, he was well aware that people do not turn brick-red in their sleep. And the problem of what was the matter with the Sherwood family was still before him.

II

"They're playing a game," he told himself after a few days. "That is, Lady Sherwood and Gerald are—poor old Sir Charles can't make much of a stab at it. The game is to make me think they are awfully glad to have me, when in reality there's something about me, or something I do, that gets them on the raw."

He almost decided to make some excuse and get away; but after all, that was not easy. In English novels, he remembered, they always had a wire calling them to London; but, darn it all! the Sherwoods knew mighty well there wasn't any one in London who cared a hoot about him.

The thing that got his goat most, he told himself, was that they apparently didn't like his friendship with Chev. Anyway they didn't seem to want him to talk about him; and whenever he tried to express his warm appreciation for all that the older man had done for him, he was instantly aware of a wall of reserve on their part, a holding of themselves aloof from him. That puzzled and hurt him, and put him on his dignity. He concluded that they thought it was cheeky of a youngster like him to think that a man like Chev could be his friend; and if that was the way they felt, he reckoned he'd jolly well better shut up about it.

But whatever it was that they didn't like about him, they most certainly did want him to have a good time. He and his pleasure appeared to be for the time being their chief consideration. And after the first day or so he began indeed to enjoy himself extremely. For one thing, he came to love the atmosphere of the old place and of the surrounding country, which he and Gerald explored together.

He liked to think that ancestors of his own had been inheritors of these green lanes, and pleasant mellow stretches. Then, too, after the first few days, he could not help seeing that they really began to like him, which of course was reassuring, and tapped his own warm friendliness, which was always ready enough to be released. And besides, he got by accident what he took to be a hint as to the trouble. He was passing the half-open door of Lady Sherwood's morning-room, when he heard Sir Charles's voice break out, "Good God, Elizabeth, I don't see how you stand it! When I see him so straight and fine-looking, and so untouched, beside our poor lad, and think—and think ——"

Skipworth hurried out of earshot, but now he understood that look of aversion in the old man's eyes which had so startled him at first. Of course, the poor old boy might easily hate the sight of him beside Gerald. With Gerald himself he really got along famously. He was a most delightful companion, full of anecdotes and history of the countryside, every foot of which he had apparently explored in the old days with Chev and the younger brother, Curtin. Yet even with Gerald, Cary sometimes felt that aloofness and reserve, and that older protective air that they all showed him. Take, for instance, that afternoon when they were lolling together on the grass in the park. The Virginian, running on in his usual eager manner, had plunged without thinking into an account of a particularly daring bit of flying on Chev's part, when suddenly he realized that Gerald had rolled over on the grass and buried his face in his arms, and he interrupted himself awkwardly. "But, of course," he said, "he must have written home about it himself."

"No, or if he did, I didn't hear of it. Go on," Gerald said in a muffled voice.

A great rush of compassion and remorse overwhelmed the Virginian, and he burst out penitently, "What a brute I am! I'm always forgetting and running on about flying, when I know it must hurt like the very devil!"

The other drew a difficult breath. "Yes," he admitted, "what you

say does hurt in a way—in a way you can't understand. But all the same I like to hear you. Go on about Chev."

So Skipworth went on and finished his account, winding up, "I don't believe there's another man in the service who could have pulled it off—but I tell you your brother's one in a million."

"Good God, don't I know it!" the other burst out. "We were all three the jolliest pals together," he got out presently in a choked voice, "Chev and the young un and I; and now——"

He did not finish, but Cary guessed his meaning. Now the young un, Curtin, was dead, and Gerald himself knocked out. But, heavens! the Virginian thought, did Gerald think Chev would go back on him now on account of his blindness? Well, you could everlastingly bet he wouldn't!

"Chev thinks the world and all of you!" he cried in eager defense of his friend's loyalty. "Lots of times when we're all awfully jolly together, he makes some excuse and goes off by himself; and Withers told me it was because he was so frightfully cut up about you. Withers said he told him once that he'd a lot rather have got it himself—so you can everlastingly bank on him!"

Gerald gave a terrible little gasp. "I—I knew he'd feel like that," he got out. "We've always cared such a lot for each other." And then he pressed his face harder than ever into the grass, and his long body quivered all over. But not for long. In a moment he took fierce hold on himself, muttering, "Well, one must carry on, whatever happens," and apologized disjointedly. "What a fearful fool you must think me! And—and this isn't very pippy for you, old chap." Presently, after that, he sat up, and said, brushing it all aside, "We're facing the old moat, aren't we? There's an interesting bit of tradition about it that I must tell you."

And there you were, Cary thought: no matter how much Gerald might be suffering from his misfortune, he must carry on just the same, and see that his visitor had a pleasant time. It made the Virginian feel like an outsider and very young, as if he were not old enough for them to show him their real feelings.

Another thing that he noticed was that they did not seem to want him to meet people. They never took him anywhere to call, and if visitors came to the house, they showed an almost panicky desire to get him out of the way. That again hurt his pride. What in heaven's name was the matter with him anyway!

III

However, on the last afternoon of his stay at Bishopsthorpe, he told himself with a rather rueful grin, that his manners must have improved a little, for they took him to tea at the rectory.

He was particularly glad to go there because, from certain jokes of Withers's, who had known the Sherwoods since boyhood, he gathered that Chev and the rector's daughter were engaged. And just as he would have liked Chev to meet Sally Berkeley, so he wanted to meet Miss Sybil Gaylord.

He had little hope of having a tête-à-tête with her, but as it fell out he did. They were all in the rectory garden together, Gerald and the rector a little behind Miss Gaylord and himself, as they strolled down a long walk with high hedges bordering it. On the other side of the hedge Lady Sherwood and her hostess still sat at the tea-table, and then it was that Cary heard Mrs. Gaylord say distinctly, "I'm afraid the strain has been too much for you—you should have let us have him."

To which Lady Sherwood returned quickly, "Oh no, that would have been impossible with ——"

"Come—come this way—I must show you the view from the arbor," Miss Gaylord broke in breathlessly; and laying a hand on his arm, she turned him abruptly into a side path.

Glancing down at her, the Southerner could not but note the panic and distress in her fair face. It was so obvious that the overheard words referred to him, and he was so bewildered by the whole situation, that he burst out impulsively, "I say, what *is* the matter with me? Why do they find me so hard to put up with?

Is it something I do—or don't they like Americans? Honestly, I wish you'd tell me."

She stood still at that, looking at him, her blue eyes full of distress and concern.

"Oh, I am so sorry," she cried. "They would be so sorry to have you think anything like that."

"But what is it?" he persisted. "Don't they like Americans?"

"Oh, no, it isn't that—Oh, quite the contrary!" she returned eagerly.

"Then it's something about me they don't like?"

"Oh, no, no! Least of all, that—*don't* think that!" she begged.

"But what am I to think, then?"

"Don't think anything just yet," she pleaded. "Wait a little, and you will understand."

She was so evidently distressed that he could not press her further; and fearing she might think him unappreciative, he said, "Well, whatever it is, it hasn't prevented me from having a ripping good time. They've seen to that, and just done everything for my pleasure."

She looked up quickly, and to his relief he saw that for once he had said the right thing.

"You have enjoyed it, then?" she questioned eagerly.

"Most awfully," he assured her warmly. "I shall always remember what a happy leave they gave me."

She gave a little sigh of satisfaction, "I am so glad," she said. "They wanted you to have a good time—that was what we all wanted."

He looked at her gratefully, thinking how sweet she was in her fair English beauty, and how good to care that he should have enjoyed his leave. How different she was too from Sally Berkeley—why, she would have made two of his little girl! And how quiet! Sally Berkeley, with her quick glancing vivacity, would have been all around her and off again like a humming-bird before she could have uttered two words. And yet he was sure that they would have been friends, just as he and Chev were. Perhaps they all would be,

after the war. And then he began to talk about Chev, being sure that, had the circumstances been reversed, Sally Berkeley would have wanted news of him. Instantly he was aware of a tense listening stillness on her part. That pleased him. Well, she did care for the old fellow all right, he thought; and though she made no response, averting her face, and plucking nervously at the leaves of the hedge as they passed slowly along, he went on pouring out his eager admiration for his friend.

At last they came to a seat in an arbour, from which one looked out upon a green beneficent landscape. It was an intimate secluded little spot—and oh, if Sally Berkeley were only there to sit beside him! And as he thought of this, it came to him whimsically that in all probability she must be longing for Chev, just as he was for Sally.

Dropping down on the bench beside her, he leaned over, and said with a friendly, almost brotherly, grin of understanding, "I reckon you're wishing Captain Sherwood was sitting here, instead of Lieutenant Cary."

The minute the impulsive words were out of his mouth, he knew he had blundered, been awkward, and inexcusably intimate. She gave a little choked gasp, and her blue eyes stared up at him, wide and startled. Good heavens, what a break he had made! No wonder the Sherwoods couldn't trust him in company! There seemed no apology that he could offer in words, but at least, he thought, he would show her that he would not have intruded on her secret without being willing to share his with her. With awkward haste he put his hand into his breast-pocket, and dragged forth the picture of Sally Berkeley he always carried there.

"This is the little girl I'm thinking about," he said, turning very red, yet boyishly determined to make amends, and also proudly confident of Sally Berkeley's charms. "I'd like mighty well for you two to know one another."

She took the picture in silence, and for a long moment stared down at the soft little face, so fearless, so confident and gay, that

smiled appealingly back at her. Then she did something astonishing,—something which seemed to him wholly un-English,—and yet he thought it the sweetest thing he had ever seen. Cupping her strong hands about the picture with a quick protectiveness, she suddenly raised it to her lips, and kissed it lightly. "O little girl!" she cried, "I hope you will be very happy!"

The little involuntary act, so tender, so sisterly and spontaneous, touched the Virginian extremely.

"Thanks, awfully," he said unsteadily. "She'll think a lot of that, just as I do—and I know she'd wish you the same."

She made no reply to that, and as she handed the picture back to him, he saw that her hands were trembling, and he had a sudden conviction that, if she had been Sally Berkeley, her eyes would have been full of tears. As she was Sybil Gaylord, however, there were no tears there, only a look that he never forgot. The look of one much older, protective, maternal almost, and as if she were gazing back at Sally Berkeley and himself from a long way ahead on the road of life. He supposed it was the way most English people felt nowadays. He had surprised it so often on all their faces, that he could not help speaking of it.

"You all think we Americans are awfully young and raw, don't you?" he questioned.

"Oh, no, not that," she deprecated. "Young perhaps for these days, yes—but it is more that you—that your country is so—so unsuffered. And we don't want you to suffer!" she added quickly.

Yes, that was it! He understood now, and, heavens, how fine it was! Old England was wounded deep—deep. What she suffered herself she was too proud to show; but out of it she wrought a great maternal care for the newcomer. Yes, it *was* fine—he hoped his country would understand.

Miss Gaylord rose. "There are Gerald and father looking for you," she said, "and I must go now." She held out her hand. "Thank you for letting me see her picture, and for everything you said about Captain Sherwood—for *everything,* remember—I want you to remember."

With a light pressure of her fingers she was gone, slipping away through the shrubbery, and he did not see her again.

IV

So he came to his last morning at Bishopsthorpe; and as he dressed, he wished it could have been different; that he were not still conscious of that baffling wall of reserve between himself and Chev's people, for whom, despite all, he had come to have a real affection.

In the breakfast-room he found them all assembled, and his last meal there seemed to him as constrained and difficult as any that had preceded it. It was over finally, however, and in a few minutes he would be leaving.

"I can never thank you enough for the splendid time I've had here," he said as he rose. "I'll be seeing Chev to-morrow, and I'll tell him all about everything."

Then he stopped dead. With a smothered exclamation, old Sir Charles had stumbled to his feet, knocking over his chair, and hurried blindly out of the room; and Gerald said, *"Mother!"* in a choked appeal.

As if it were a signal between them, Lady Sherwood pushed her chair back a little from the table, her long delicate fingers dropped together loosely in her lap; she gave a faint sigh as if a restraining mantle slipped from her shoulders, and, looking up at the youth before her, her fine pale face lighted with a kind of glory, she said, "No, dear lad, no. You can never tell Chev, for he is gone."

"Gone!" he cried.

"Yes," she nodded back at him, just above a whisper; and now her face quivered, and the tears began to rush down her cheeks.

"Not *dead!"* he cried. "Not Chev—not that! O my God, Gerald, not *that!"*

"Yes," Gerald said. "They got him two days after you left."

It was so overwhelming, so unexpected and shocking, above all so terrible, that the friend he had so greatly loved and admired was

gone out of his life forever, that young Cary stumbled back into his seat, and, crumpling over, buried his face in his hands, making great uncouth gasps as he strove to choke back his grief.

Gerald groped hastily around the table, and flung an arm about his shoulders.

"Steady on, dear fellow, steady," he said, though his own voice broke.

"When did you hear?" Cary got out at last.

"We got the official notice just the day before you came—and Withers has written us particulars since."

"And you *let* me come in spite of it! And stay on, when every word I said about him must have—have fairly *crucified* each one of you! Oh, forgive me! forgive me!" he cried distractedly. He saw it all now; he understood at last. It was not on Gerald's account that they could not talk of flying and of Chev, it was because—because their hearts were broken over Chev himself. "Oh, forgive me!" he gasped again.

"Dear lad, there is nothing to forgive," Lady Sherwood returned. "How could we help loving your generous praise of our poor darling? We loved it, and you for it; we wanted to hear it, but we were afraid. We were afraid we might break down, and that you would find out."

The tears were still running down her cheeks. She did not brush them away now; she seemed glad to have them there at last.

Sinking down on his knees, he caught her hands. "Why did you *let* me do such a horrible thing?" he cried. "Couldn't you have trusted me to understand? Couldn't you *see* I loved him just as you did——No, no!" he broke down humbly. "Of course I couldn't love him as his own people did. But you must have seen how I felt about him—how I admired him, and would have followed him anywhere—and *of course* if I had known, I should have gone away at once."

"Ah, but that was just what we were afraid of," she said quickly. "We were afraid you would go away and have a lonely leave somewhere. And in these days a boy's leave is so precious a thing that

nothing must spoil it—*nothing,*" she reiterated; and her tears fell upon his hands like a benediction. "But we didn't do it very well, I'm afraid," she went on presently, with gentle contrition. "You were too quick and understanding; you guessed there was something wrong. We were sorry not to manage better," she apologized.

"Oh, you wonderful, wonderful people!" he gasped. "Doing everything for my happiness, when all the time—all the time——"

His voice went out sharply, as his mind flashed back to scene after scene: to Gerald's long body lying quivering on the grass; to Sybil Gaylord wishing Sally Berkeley happiness out of her own tragedy; and to the high look on Lady Sherwood's face. They seemed to him themselves, and yet more than themselves—shining bits of the mosaic of a great nation. Disjointedly there passed through his mind familiar words—"these are they who have washed their garments—having come out of great tribulation."* No wonder they seemed older.

"We—we couldn't have done it in America," he said humbly.

He had a desperate desire to get away to himself; to hide his face in his arms, and give vent to the tears that were stifling him; to weep for his lost friend, and for this great heartbreaking heroism of theirs.

"But why did you do it?" he persisted. "Was it because I was his friend?"

"Oh, it was much more than that," Gerald said quickly. "It was a matter of the two countries. Of course, we jolly well knew you didn't belong to us, and didn't want to, but for the life of us we couldn't help a sort of feeling that you did. And when America was in at last, and you fellows began to come, you seemed like our very own come back after many years, and," he added, a throb in his voice, "we were most awfully glad to see you—we wanted a chance to show you how England felt."

Skipworth Cary rose to his feet. The tears for his friend were still wet upon his lashes. Stooping, he took Lady Sherwood's hands in his and raised them to his lips. "As long as I live, I shall never

*A biblical reference. See *Revelations, 7, xiv.*

forget," he said. "And others of us have seen it too in other ways—be sure America will never forget, either."

She looked up at his untouched youth out of her beautiful sad eyes, the exalted light still shining through her tears. "Yes," she said, "you see it was—I don't know exactly how to put it—but it was England to America."

THE WHIRLIGIG OF LIFE

By

O. HENRY

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The Cumberland Mountains, the background for THE WHIRLIGIG OF LIFE, are less than two hundred miles from O. Henry's boyhood home in North Carolina. As a lad he must frequently have seen such mountain folk as Ranse and Ariela Bilbro and Benaja Widdup. The county in which the Bilbros and the Justice-of-the-Peace lived is really in Tennessee, but its name is not really *Piedmont.*

WILLIAM SYDNEY PORTER was born in Greensboro, North Carolina, in 1862 and became O. HENRY about 1900. He died in 1911. Perhaps only the student can describe his contribution to short story technique, but to most Americans the words *short story* and *O. Henry* belong together.

As a boy young Porter read a great deal—mostly in the classics. He attended his aunt's school, but his early education came largely from his reading. Later this was augmented in the best of all schools—Experience.

In 1882 he went to Texas and for the next fifteen years earned his living either as a real estate clerk, as a draughtsman in the Land Office, as a bank teller, or as a newspaper man. Undoubtedly the colorful Southwest stirred and stimulated the romantic side of his nature.

Porter had to suffer for the lax management of the bank where he acted as teller. He may have been technically, though certainly he was not morally, at fault in some irregularity; and, rather than face arrest, he fled to Central America. He returned after a year when his wife was dying, stood trial, and was sent to prison for a short term.

While still in prison he took the pen name of O. HENRY and began to write short stories. These were immediately successful.

In 1902 he came to New York, where he lived until his death. Long before he died he was regarded generally as America's foremost short story writer, and his fame continued to grow after his death.

THE WHIRLIGIG OF LIFE

By O. Henry

JUSTICE-OF-THE-PEACE Benaja Widdup sat in the door of his office smoking his elder-stem pipe. Half-way to the zenith the Cumberland range rose blue-gray in the afternoon haze. A speckled hen swaggered down the main street of the "settlement," cackling foolishly.

Up the road came a sound of creaking axles, and then a slow cloud of dust, and then a bull-cart bearing Ransie Bilbro and his wife. The cart stopped at the Justice's door, and the two climbed down. Ransie was a narrow six feet of sallow brown skin and yellow hair. The imperturbability of the mountains hung upon him like a suit of armour. The woman was calicoed, angled, snuff-brushed, and weary with unknown desires. Through it all gleamed a faint protest of cheated youth unconscious of its loss.

The Justice of the Peace slipped his feet into his shoes, for the sake of dignity, and moved to let them enter.

"We-all," said the woman, in a voice like the wind blowing through pine boughs, "wants a divo'ce." She looked at Ransie to see if he noted any flaw or ambiguity or evasion or partiality or self-partisanship in her statement of their business.

"A divo'ce," repeated Ransie, with a solemn nod. "We-all can't git along together nohow. It's lonesome enough fur to live in the mount'ins when a man and a woman keers fur one another. But when she's a-spittin' like a wildcat or a-sullenin' like a hoot-owl in the cabin, a man ain't got no call to live with her."

"When he's a no-'count varmint," said the woman without any especial warmth, "a-traipsin' along of scalawags and moonshiners and a-layin' on his back pizen 'ith co'n whiskey, and a-pesterin' folks with a pack o' hungry, triflin' houn's to feed!"

"When she keeps a-throwin' skillet lids," came Ransie's antiphony, "and slings b'ilin' water on the best coon-dog in the Cumberlands, and sets herself agin' cookin' a man's victuals, and keeps him awake o' nights accusin' him of a sight of doin's!"

"When he's al'ays a-fightin' the revenues, and gits a hard name in the mount'ins fur a mean man, who's gwine to be able fur to sleep o' nights?"

The Justice of the Peace stirred deliberately to his duties. He placed his one chair and a wooden stool for his petitioners. He opened his book of statutes on the table and scanned the index. Presently he wiped his spectacles and shifted his inkstand.

"The law and the statutes," said he, "air silent on the subjeck of divo'ce as fur as the jurisdiction of this co't air concerned. But, accordin' to equity and the Constitution and the golden rule, it's a bad barg'in that can't run both ways. If a justice of the peace can marry a couple, it's plain that he is bound to be able to divo'ce 'em. This here office will issue a decree of divo'ce and abide by the decision of the Supreme Co't to hold it good."

Ransie Bilbro drew a small tobacco-bag from his trousers pocket. Out of this he shook upon the table a five-dollar note. "Sold a b'arskin and two foxes fur that," he remarked. "It's all the money we got."

"The regular price of a divo'ce in this co't," said the Justice, "air five dollars." He stuffed the bill into the pocket of his homespun vest with a deceptive air of indifference. With much bodily toil and mental travail he wrote the decree upon half a sheet of foolscap, and then copied it upon the other. Ransie Bilbro and his wife listened to his reading of the document that was to give them freedom:

"Know all men by these presents that Ransie Bilbro and his wife, Ariela Bilbro, this day personally appeared before me and promises that hereinafter they will neither love, honor, nor obey each other, neither for better nor worse, being of sound mind and body, and accept summons for divorce according to the peace and dignity of the State. Herein fail not, so help you God. Benaja Widdup, jus-

tice of the peace in and for the county of Piedmont, State of Tennessee."

The Justice was about to hand one of the documents to Ransie. The voice of Ariela delayed the transfer. Both men looked at her. Their dull masculinity was confronted by something sudden and unexpected in the woman.

"Judge, don't you give him that air paper yit. 'Tain't all settled, nohow. I got to have my rights first. I got to have my ali-money. 'Tain't no kind of a way to do fur a man to divo'ce his wife 'thout her havin' a cent fur to do with. I'm a-layin' off to be a-goin' up to brother Ed's up on Hogback Mount'in. I'm bound fur to hev a pa'r of shoes and some snuff and things besides. Ef Ranse kin affo'd a divo'ce, let him pay me ali-money."

Ransie Bilbro was stricken to dumb perplexity. There had been no previous hint of alimony. Women were always bringing up startling and unlooked-for issues.

Justice Benaja Widdup felt that the point demanded judicial decision. The authorities were also silent on the subject of alimony. But the woman's feet were bare. The trail to Hogback Mountain was steep and flinty.

"Ariela Bilbro," he asked, in official tones, "how much did you 'low would be good and sufficient ali-money in the case befo' the co't?"

"I 'lowed," she answered, "fur the shoes and all, to say five dollars. That ain't much fur ali-money, but I reckon that'll git me up to brother Ed's."

"The amount," said the Justice, "air not onreasonable. Ransie Bilbro, you air ordered by the co't to pay the plaintiff the sum of five dollars befo' the decree of divo'ce air issued."

"I hain't no mo' money," breathed Ransie, heavily. "I done paid you all I had."

"Otherwise," said the Justice, looking severely over his spectacles, "you air in contempt of co't."

"I reckon if you gimme till to-morrow," pleaded the husband,

"I mout be able to rake or scrape it up somewhars. I never looked for to be a-payin' no ali-money."

"The case air adjourned," said Benaja Widdup, "till to-morrow, when you-all will present yo'selves and obey the order of the co't. Followin' of which the decrees of divo'ce will be delivered." He sat down in the door and began to loosen a shoestring.

"We mout as well go down to Uncle Ziah's," decided Ransie, "and spend the night." He climbed into the cart on one side, and Ariela climbed in on the other. Obeying the flap of his rope, the little red bull slowly came around on a tack, and the cart crawled away in the nimbus arising from its wheels.

Justice-of-the-peace Benaja Widdup smoked his elder-stem pipe. Late in the afternoon he got his weekly paper, and read it until the twilight dimmed its lines. Then he lit the tallow candle on his table, and read until the moon rose, marking the time for supper. He lived in the double log cabin on the slope near the girdled poplar. Going home to supper he crossed a little branch darkened by a laurel thicket. The dark figure of a man stepped from the laurels and pointed a rifle at his breast. His hat was pulled down low, and something covered most of his face.

"I want yo' money," said the figure, " 'thout any talk. I'm gettin' nervous, and my finger's a-wabblin' on this here trigger."

"I've only got f-f-five dollars," said the Justice, producing it from his vest pocket.

"Roll it up," came the order, "and stick it in the end of this here gun-bar'l."

The bill was crisp and new. Even fingers that were clumsy and trembling found little difficulty in making a spill of it and inserting it (this with less ease) into the muzzle of the rifle.

"Now I reckon you kin be goin' along," said the robber.

The Justice lingered not on his way.

The next day came the little red bull, drawing the cart to the office door. Justice Benaja Widdup had his shoes on, for he was expecting the visit. In his presence Ransie Bilbro handed to his

wife a five-dollar bill. The official's eye sharply viewed it. It seemed to curl up as though it had been rolled and inserted into the end of a gun-barrel. But the Justice refrained from comment. It is true that other bills might be inclined to curl. He handed each one a decree of divorce. Each stood awkwardly silent, slowly folding the guarantee of freedom. The woman cast a shy glance full of constraint at Ransie.

"I reckon you'll be goin' back up to the cabin," she said, "along 'ith the bull-cart. There's bread in the tin box settin' on the shelf. I put the bacon in the b'ilin' pot to keep the hounds from gittin' it. Don't forget to wind the clock to-night."

"You air a-goin' to your brother Ed's?" asked Ransie, with fine unconcern.

"I was 'lowin' to get along up thar afore night. I ain't sayin' as they'll pester theyselves any to make me welcome, but I hain't nowhar else fur to go. It's a right smart ways, and I reckon I better be goin'. I'll be a-sayin' good-bye, Ranse—that is, if you keer fur to say so."

"I don't know as anybody's a hound dog," said Ransie, in a martyr's voice, "fur to not want to say good-bye—'less you air so anxious to git away that you don't want me to say it."

Ariela was silent. She folded the five-dollar bill and her decree carefully, and placed them in the bosom of her dress. Benaja Widdup watched the money disappear with mournful eyes behind his spectacles.

And then with his next words he achieved rank (as his thoughts ran) with either the great crowd of the world's sympathizers or the little crowd of its great financiers.

"Be kind o' lonesome in the old cabin to-night, Ranse," he said.

Ransie Bilbro stared out at the Cumberlands, clear blue now in the sunlight. He did not look at Ariela.

"I 'low it might be lonesome," he said; "but when folks gits mad and wants a divo'ce, you can't make folks stay."

"There's others wanted a divo'ce," said Ariela, speaking to the wooden stool. "Besides, nobody don't want nobody to stay."

"Nobody never said they didn't."

"Nobody never said they did. I reckon I better start on now to brother Ed's."

"Nobody can't wind that old clock."

"Want me to go back along 'ith you in the cart and wind it fur you, Ranse?"

The mountaineer's countenance was proof against emotion. But he reached out a big hand and enclosed Ariela's thin brown one. Her soul peeped out once through her impassive face, hallowing it.

"Them hounds shan't pester you no more," said Ransie. "I reckon I been mean and low down. You wind that clock, Ariela."

"My heart hit's in that cabin, Ranse," she whispered, "along 'ith you. I ain't a-goin' to git mad no more. Le's be startin', Ranse, so's we kin git home by sundown."

Justice-of-the-peace Benaja Widdup interposed as they started for the door, forgetting his presence.

"In the name of the State of Tennessee," he said, "I forbid you-all to be a-defyin' of its laws and statutes. This co't is mo' than willin' and full of joy to see the clouds of discord and misunderstandin' rollin' away from two lovin' hearts, but it air the duty of the co't to p'eserve the morals and integrity of the State. The co't reminds you that you air no longer man and wife, but air divo'ced by regular decree, and as such air not entitled to the benefits and 'purtenances of the mattermonal estate."

Ariela caught Ransie's arm. Did those words mean that she must lose him now when they had just learned the lesson of life?

"But the co't air prepared," went on the Justice, "fur to remove the disabilities set up by the decree of divo'ce. The co't air on hand to perform the solemn ceremony of marri'ge, thus fixin' things up and enablin' the parties in the case to resume the honour'ble and elevatin' estate of mattermony which they desires. The fee fur performin' said ceremony will be, in this case, to wit, five dollars."

Ariela caught the gleam of promise in his words. Swiftly her hand went to her bosom. Freely as an alighting dove the bill flut-

tered to the Justice's table. Her sallow cheek coloured as she stood hand in hand with Ransie and listened to the reuniting words.

Ransie helped her into the cart, and climbed in beside her. The little red bull turned once more, and they set out, hand-clasped, for the mountains.

Justice-of-the-peace Benaja Widdup sat in his door and took off his shoes. Once again he fingered the bill tucked down in his vest pocket. Once again he smoked his elder-stem pipe. Once again the speckled hen swaggered down the main street of the "settlement," cackling foolishly.

THE PENALTIES OF ARTEMIS

By

KATHARINE FULLERTON GEROULD

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Is there a harder thing to do than be perfectly well bred when you are alone with one other person whom you don't like or who doesn't like you, and you can't get away from each other, and you have nothing to read and no place to go?

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Three volumes of her short stories have been published: *Vain Oblations, The Great Tradition,* and *Valiant Dust. Modes and Morals* is a collection of essays. She has written three novels: *Lost Valley, A Change of Air,* and *Conquistador.*

THE PENALTIES OF ARTEMIS

By KATHARINE FULLERTON GEROULD

PERSIS LAMBERT was asleep in her berth when the catastrophe came. The boat was not crowded—she was not a transatlantic liner nor yet a P. & O. in the season—and Miss Lambert's aunt, with whom she was travelling, had, with her maid, a separate stateroom. The niece was the solitary occupant of her own. The alarm was sudden, and the ship's discipline none of the best. Mrs. Lambert's maid, having an eye to a legacy long promised, and the utter futility of the legacy if she did not survive, clothed her bulky, invalidish asset as well as she could and put her whole soul into dragging herself and the asset on deck. There were valuables, too, to collect in that hurried moment, for the chief asset would not stir without them.

The maid was sent to wake the young girl—so much the second wife of Persis Lambert's uncle demanded of her—but it is a question whether her excited rattling of the stateroom door and her single cry did more than start Persis Lambert on a dallying path towards waking. It was, in any case, the hurrying feet on the deck above and the shouting of stewards in the corridor that made her sit up in her berth and decide to dress as quickly as ever she could. Not once throughout the whole experience did she set eyes on Mrs. Lambert or Mrs. Lambert's maid.

By the time Persis Lambert got on deck all the other women and children in the cabin had been thrust into the boats that were now dotting the moonlit sea at sparse and helpless intervals. Those of the under-officers and crew who were left on board were coping as best they could with a swirling, shrieking crowd of third-class passengers—men, chiefly. Those in command had done their best to sift out women and children from the malodorous throng that beset

the narrow exits from the steerage. Stewards had been sent down to search for any left behind; but several of the stewards had gone overboard on their own account with life-belts, swimming for the boats as they pulled off. The ship was sinking in a heavy, business-like fashion by the stern—the captain on her bridge like a statue. He had lost his head, and the first mate was virtually in charge. The only thing that stuck, out of some twenty lucky years at sea, was the conviction that he must go down with his ship. His silence was extraordinary; he was posed there for death; and Persis Lambert herself, crawling and climbing up the companionway to the outer air, saw the last gesticulations of appeal made to him by his second officer—who, even as she found support in a brass rail, and clung, trying to arrange her mazed thoughts, flung up his arms with a despairing oath and slid aft into the babel. He did not see her clinging to her rail.

Persis Lambert had put on a life-belt before leaving her stateroom, but she felt it impossible now to test its value. She was in that condition where the mind seems at once omniscient and useless. She perceived all the alternatives before her, with no power to act in any way—a paralysis not so much of the motor nerves as of the will itself. She stood there, cramped and waiting, in a great lucid dream of indecision. To be sure, neither of the alternatives was tempting —to try her luck with the screaming mongrels aft, or to climb to the deck rail and leap into the glittering black waste of sea. If it came to that, why not face the stern of the boat and wait until the ocean took her? She could not swim; it was folly for a non-swimming female to betake herself to the biggest ocean in the world before she had to. The only thing she felt like doing was climbing up on the bridge and standing beside the captain, at parade. That, too, was foolish. Yet she would move as soon as she was sure of not doing something silly.

All this, instead of being told as a sequence, should be placed before you, if that were possible, in one synthetic glimpse. These thoughts coexisted in her mind: it was a pigeonholed instant, clear to perception as a small, slightly complicated picture. Her past life,

contrary to precedent (for she was virtually drowning), did not, in any detail, occur to her.

Long before the thing could have been put into words, a man stood before her. He had somehow, between moonshine and crazy lantern-ray, made her out, clutching her rail close to the companion-way whence she had emerged.

"Come along." There was nothing excited in his tone. He was as stolid as the *Owara* at her business of sinking, as the captain at his business of going down with the ship.

Persis Lambert scarcely recognized the man at her side, though she knew his name—Angier. She had seen him on deck and in the dining-saloon, but they had never spoken. Mrs. Lambert—now tossing in one of those distant cockle-shells—had given her niece little or no time for new acquaintances.

"Where to?"

Angier took her arm in his to steady her. "Anywhere out of this."

"What was it?"

"Reef, I guess. Stove in in the wrong place. Oh, *quick!*" He pulled her towards the side of the ship. "Not much time. There'll be an explosion any second, probably."

"But where? I can't swim. Do you want me to jump overboard?"

"You'll have to. No chance of those boats." He jerked a shoulder aft. "It's hell down there. Discipline all gone to pot. Not room for everybody. Pity about the captain." He turned for an instant and lifted his cap bridgeward with his free arm.

"Can you get into that?" Angier pointed over the side to a small boat. "It's not such a jump as it would have been an hour ago."

"Yes. But what's the use? It must leak—or something—or they wouldn't have left it."

The man paused an instant and looked at her. "I'm not making you. I don't know a thing about the blamed tub. But my guess is that after the very first, in the rush for the bigger ones, they

forgot this. They got it ready, you see. I don't insist. If you *want* to chance it down there . . . But you must do something—quick."

Persis Lambert looked aft. She saw men, brown and white, struggling in a confused mass. It was like a pit of snakes. She heard a pistol-shot or two, and indescribable cries—inarticulate, indecent. Then she turned back to Angier. "Shall I jump?"

"I'll go first, thanks. Then jump at—for—me, as far as the moon will let you." He felt his pockets quickly, then buttoned his coat. "Wait a second!" he called, and actually disappeared across the deck. Before she could wonder very hard, he had returned with a shapeless bundle that looked like a heap of blankets. "No good to the *Owara,*" he muttered, as he flung them into the rocking boat overside. Then he jumped. There was silence for an instant, but presently, in the moonlight, Miss Lambert saw him holding up his arms.

"For God's sake, fall as straight and as limp as you can."

The deck was uncannily near the water. Miss Lambert heard his scarcely raised voice without difficulty. She brought him to his knees as she fell into his arms, but they soon righted themselves. After stooping for an instant, groping on the bottom of the boat, he stood up with a quick motion of his whole body

"It doesn't leak, I think. They just forgot. Lord, what a rotten push!"

Angier loosed the falls, then unshipped the oars and bent to them. "Can't stop to make you comfortable now. We must get out of this party. Just look and see if there is water in that keg, please. Yes? I know there's food. I saw the tins."

"Are you going to try to follow the other boats?

"Might as well try to follow a firefly. I'm going to get us out of this—er—place, if I can. I am sure you're like me—you'd rather die in the open."

He rowed steadily away from the *Owara,* out to sea—a phrase that ill suggests their infinitesimal progress. Still, one wave shoved them idly on to another, and in a few moments they were perceptibly further away from the sinking *Owara.* The cries grew less

horrid to the ear; they sounded more like a queer, shrill snarling across the water. At last, louder than the death-throes behind them sounded in Persis Lambert's ear the cracking of the man's muscles as he rowed.

"We're the only people, I believe, on this side of the ship," she ventured, finally. She had not moved from her uncomfortable position on the big bundle Angier had thrown into the boat.

"You bet we are." That was all his reply.

"But why?"

Angier pulled for five minutes before replying. "Can you get one of those extra oars?" he asked, finally.

The girl reached for one and pulled it towards her. "Well? Do you want me to row, too?"

"Hardly. Though you'll probably have to learn to steer. But if any damned Lascar comes swimming along and trying to catch hold, chop him over the arm with it. I told you I wanted to get out of the party. And I don't make for a reef if I think there is one there. We may tie up on one before morning, but at least I'm not trying to run us on the shore. Don't forget about the Lascar." And his muscles cracked again.

Miss Lambert laid down the oar. "I don't think I could do that, thanks. There's plenty of room, and if there weren't, I wouldn't try to keep any one out."

"No, I dare say you wouldn't. But I prefer to die decently. So I'll trouble you to leave that oar where I can get at it myself without disengaging one of these. Better make yourself as comfortable as you can—though I don't advise you to lie down. . . . Ah!"

The explosion had come. Both mechanically ducked their heads, then lifted them. The crazy lights of the *Owara* were quenched by the sea. They could see, by the moon's glimmer, the quick, final rush of her settling. The captain's interminable wait on the bridge, they knew, was over. But by common instinct they did not speak of the catastrophe. Angier was rowing hard, and the girl tried to limber her cramped limbs and get herself into a more competent condition and posture. Carefully, deftly, she arranged the things

that lay pell-mell in the bottom of the boat, selected her seat, and composed herself.

While the moon lasted the excitement of the situation kept Persis Lambert's mind strictly at home in the foreshortened world of the little boat. She peered about her, taking stock of her physical context. There were blankets—she had wrapped herself in one of them—a water-keg, tins that must hold food. There were also a few irregularly shaped objects here and there which she could not identify in the faint light.

They talked very little after the moon had set. Angier stopped rowing now and then for a moment, letting his body relax. Once he pulled a flask from his pocket, removed the silver cup and passed it to her, asking her to fill it from the water-keg. He offered her whisky, but she refused it. Excited, warmly wrapped, as yet she felt no chill. The stars paled gradually, seeming to sink deeper into a lightening sky—as if they were withdrawing, backwards, out of the presence of earth and sea. The tropic dawn was coming upon them. Around was the constant complex noise of the ocean, running through a watery gamut, from the distant boom to the swishing of the waves round the boat itself.

On the *Owara* Persis Lambert had seen little or nothing of her companion; but she remembered him tall and dark, and given to inhabiting the smoking-room. Occasionally, since they had crossed the equator, she had seen him walking the deck at a tremendous pace. She had never seen him talking to any one, though of course she had not known how he might spend his time in the smoking-room. Mrs. Lambert had made friends with no one, and her niece had, perforce followed her example. But she was sure that she had never seen Angier in any of the groups who chattered away the tedious leagues. She felt she must settle a few things before the day was upon them. So strange a day it was bound to be!

"How did it happen you weren't with the first boats?" she asked.

"How did it happen *you* weren't?" He stopped rowing for a moment.

"I must have slept through a good deal. My aunt's maid waked me, but I didn't realize until I heard the confusion. . . . I was pretty slow in dressing, I fancy. And I was trying to decide what to do when you came and told me. I'm very grateful to you."

"Um—yes. I dare say I'm grateful to you. I hadn't made up my mind, either. You're sure your aunt got off on one of the first boats?"

"I think she must have. They wouldn't overlook her. Let's not talk about it. Every one loses his wits at such a time. Think of the poor captain."

"I've no time to waste thinking of anything. Do you realize what we're in for?"

"No, I don't." Persis Lambert answered in a matter-of-fact way. "I'm no heroine, by the way. I'm never seasick, but that's all you can say for me. I hope I shan't fail you or be a nuisance, but I can't imagine that I shall be any good."

"Humph! Well, I'm no Swiss Family Robinson myself. I'm fairly strong in the arms, legs, and back, but I am not what you call a resourceful person. I've never had any experience of this kind. So if we do strike land, you needn't expect any of the comforts of camp life. I haven't even a pistol, if worse should come to worst. What did you manage to save?"

"I've got some money, which is of no use—and a flask—and my warmest clothes on—and, I think, a toothbrush in my pocket, and a cake of soap. I didn't see any sense in weighting myself down."

"I did better than you, then. At least, I hope there's some loot worth having in that blanket you have your feet on. I stepped into the smoking-room for a moment, you remember. Matches, anyhow. Ah, there's the sun. Suppose we eat. It might give us courage to look around. We must be in a mess of islands about here, you know; and there's a great choice in islands, in these parts —especially when you haven't a pistol. . . . I hope you won't let me get on your nerves," he added suddenly. "It's a queer hole to be in, and you must be sensible. If you played the fool, I'd chuck you overboard."

"I don't think you would." Miss Lambert's head was bent over a biscuit-tin. "You chucked me *on* board, you remember."

"Oh, it was no place to die—that disreputable old tub with all her virtue oozing out of her."

"You seem to be very fastidious about your place of dying."

"Well!"—he jerked his head back and faced the sun—"you can't say it isn't decent here. You didn't want to go down strangling with a lot of dirty Chinks biting you in the back, did you? When I'm through breakfast, I'll look over that loot. I hope I was inspired last night in the smoking-room. I pawed about like lightning for ten seconds. By the way, what is your name? Mine is Angier."

"Persis Lambert. I should like a drink of water, please. Thank you. And what are we going to do about the sun?"

"Rig up something if we can. And, for heaven's sake, go slow on the water. I've got a map in my pocket, but it's rather small. The boat's not much bigger, and you'll kindly remember that we may be dead before night. If a storm came up like the one two days ago, you certainly would be. You can't swim, remember."

"Why should I go slow on the water, then?"

"Because we have a fighting chance."

"Even if I can't swim?"

"Oh, I'd keep you up as long as I could, if you didn't clutch me."

"You said you'd throw me overboard if necessary." Persis Lambert raised her hand. "Kindly understand me. I'm not asking for anything. Only it would be much more convenient if you would explain to me briefly what I can expect from you. What sort of man are you, anyhow? I don't care, one way or the other. I simply should like to know. Are you going to leave me to shift for myself, or are you going to be conventional?"

Angier laughed—a strange, impotent sound in that waste of sunny waters. "You can bet I'm going to be conventional. That is, I'll play the game if you will. If you're a good girl, I'll be a good boy—if only because being chivalrous at a time like this, edging along towards the tropic of Capricorn, is so ridiculous. I'll let you have the last mouthful, just because it would be so sensible not to."

"You don't mean that."

"Well, just to prove that I am a free man. I'm not going to chuck a helpless thing like the moral law, just because a big brute like the Pacific Ocean comes along and tells me to. I let it pretty much alone when I'm at home, but damned if it isn't worth wasting time on in a place like this, just as a spectacle. Don't you worry. It'll probably be a shark or a native that does for you. It won't be I—unless you take to acting in a way no man could stand. There's such a thing as being too conventional, you know." He looked her squarely in the eyes.

"I'll be as sensible as I can. But I'm a free woman, too."

"Not if you can't swim."

"Oh, if you think you can swim across the Pacific, I don't wonder you boast about being free." Then, for the first time since the accident, a drawing-room manner returned to her. She spoke very sweetly. "But let's not quarrel. What are we going to do about sleeping? You must be absolutely exhausted. Couldn't I do something with the oars while you took a nap?"

"You might decorate them if you've got a box of colors about you. Thanks, I'm not sleepy. But you're quite right. You'd better curl up for a while. I'll try to rig up something with an oar and one of the blankets. I'll wake you when I want you. You don't look very strong, by the way."

"I'm not, but I'm perfectly well. I'm at my normal weight. It isn't much. But——" She looked around.

"I'll be sleeping myself later. Then you can comb your hair."

Miss Lambert curled herself up obediently and uncomfortably under the improvised tent. She fell asleep sooner than she had hoped, and the man, taking up the oars, with a pocket compass before him on the water-keg, rowed steadily on. The first boats had gone north, making, he suspected, for a port. The other lot, what with bad discipline and savage endeavors defeating themselves, must have gone down, taken by the sharks or that mid-sea level which buoys up the drowned. Many of them had probably been killed outright by huge splinters of the exploding *Owara*. No

relic, no fragment, since the dawn, had drifted their way. He kept his course, as well as he could, due south. "A great getaway," he murmured to himself. He did not once look at the girl.

When, a few hours later, Persis Lambert crawled out of her improvised tepee, her sleep-soaked eyes saw, thanks to the glare of the sun on multiplied leagues of water, only the vague litter of objects about her. Her eyes clung to the blessedly dark surfaces of little things—a blanket, the handle of an old hatchet, her own skirt. Then they traveled to Angier's figure at the bow. By lifting and lowering her eyelids in quick rhythm, to shake the sleep out, she managed finally to focus her gaze, to discount to some extent the rude blaze of the ocean. Angier had not spoken to her, and she now saw why. Oblivious of Persis Lambert, his back half turned to her, he was looking steadily out to sea through a small pair of binoculars. Perfectly motionless, he seemed to be studying some fixed point in the distance. He must have heard the stir of her waking and moving forward in the boat, but he paid no more attention to her than if she had been the ship's cat stretching herself. She did not know to what point of the compass his gaze was directed—all directions were alike to her, with the sun overhead. She limbered her cramped limbs as best she could in that tiny rocking space, smoothed her hair, and wiped her face with her handkerchief. Finally she turned, to parallel with her own eyes the path of his long, steady gaze through the glass. Then she exclaimed, for land, no less, was what she saw. She was incapable of judging distances, but the peculiar outline of palms was distinguishable to her, lifted above a tiny colorless strip that must be shore. At the girl's exclamation Angier turned and put the glass down carefully.

"These aren't much good—tourist things—but you can see for yourself what I'm looking at." He did not offer her the glass; and she did not ask for it.

"How far away?"

"I don't know. Distances are deceptive, of course. But you will notice that there is a favoring wind and a current too, I'm pretty

sure. I don't know that I like the current; but I can't say that I like being boiled alive, either. We shall get there soon enough, I think. You didn't sleep more than an hour or two. I think I'll turn in myself, after you've got some notion of steering. No point in using up muscle to keep out of this wind-and-current combination. There *must* be a current, you know——" He knotted his brows, as if in displeasure.

"Why do you mind the current so?"

Angier grinned. "I'm no navigator, please remember. Nobody ever taught me what to do with a current in a coral area! But you can wake me up before we get anywhere near."

"May I see the map?"

"Sure! But I am afraid it was made only for European consumption. There must be several hundred islands in the immediate neighborhood"—he waved his arm impartially in a circular sweep round the horizon. "I do know about where the *Owara* went down. I looked at the ship's chart last evening. But it doesn't help us much, does it? Now let me show you what to do back here."

Persis Lambert took her instructions in steering as intelligently as she could. They were, for that matter, haltingly given. Angier had to confess, with grim laughter, that he knew very little about the business. "I've had a lot of things happen to me, but they've never been in boats. Perhaps it's a pity we didn't ship a Lascar while we were about it. But what would have been the good of a Lascar without a pistol to shoot him with? Wake me up any minute you want me. I don't think there's much you can do, as a matter of fact, except try to keep her from slewing entirely out of her course. And if it *is* a wind-and-current combination, she couldn't do that if she tried. *Au revoir!"*

He stuck his head out of the tepee after he had burrowed his way in.

"You didn't bring a pistol, did you?"

"Of course not. I never had a pistol in my life."

"All right, all right. Only it is just as well to be sure."

"Did you think I would shoot you?"

A deal of pent-up sarcasm went into her tone. There was no reply. Persis Lambert looked about for the binoculars, but they had gone, slung over Angier's shoulder, into the tepee. She sat for a long time clutching the steering-rope as he had directed, gazing at the line of palms on the horizon. It was a great relief to be alone. Occasionally she closed her eyes for a moment to shut out the glare that stabbed like a million arrows; but whenever she opened them again she stared always at that fixed point as if there were no other fact abroad upon the sea.

It was late afternoon when Angier and Persis Lambert landed on their island. Angier confessed that he had feared a hundred easy ways of destruction, but in point of fact the low, sandy coast seemed positively to welcome them. A tiny recess in the shore-line embraced their little boat, harbor fashion—though the *Owara* would have filled its curving arms to overflowing. Angier had trained his glass on the land many times before landing, but at last he slung it back over his shoulder, and eventually they actually heard the soft crunch of sand under the keel as they beached the boat—the first land-noise either had heard for many a day. They seemed to have stepped out of a moving nightmare of great waters, a vast aqueous vision, into a firm, terrestrial reality. Persis Lambert hummed to herself as she carried things from the boat to the shade of a palm-grove.

"Stop that, will you, please?" The man's harassed voice sounded close behind her.

"Why? I hated the boat."

"You don't yet know whether we have this bit of hell to ourselves or not. And as soon as I can decide what to do with you, I've got to find out."

She stopped where she was, with her load. "And leave me?"

"Some one's got to stay with the stores. They aren't much, but they may be all we'll have for some time."

"Do you really think"—it was her sweet tone, brought back into use for the occasion—"that I should be very effective if any one did turn up who wanted them?"

Angier laughed shortly. "Right you are. You wouldn't—unless it were an animal."

"There are very few animals"—she turned again toward the palm-grove—"that wouldn't soon be in possession, for all me. My relations with our dumb brothers don't extend beyond dogs—small ones, with collars."

He looked at her curiously. "I should think you would like to get rid of me for a little while."

"I'd love to." Her tone was still very sweet. "But I prefer you to a quadruped. And until I'm better acquainted with the natives I think I prefer you to them. Of course, they may turn out very nice. In that case, we'll see."

Angier shrugged his shoulders. "All right. Only, if you can spare me for five minutes, I'll go into the next bunch of palms and look through the glass. There'll be a lagoon, or I miss my guess. Keep down by the boat, please, and, if you want me, shout. I shall be close by." In his promised five minutes he returned. "It's a smallish place, after all. There is a lagoon. We'd better walk round it, I fancy. It would be something of a relief to know that we are the sole inhabitants, though what we shall live on —— Oh, well, hang it! no use borrowing trouble."

Both man and girl were silent on their strange pilgrimage. Persis Lambert, indeed, was all but exhausted; and as soon as Angier delivered himself grudgingly of the opinion that they were indeed the only human occupants of the island, she begged to return to the landing-place. The circumference of the atoll Angier judged to be a scant two miles. It was the classic coral island; baldly described, a ring of palms inclosing a lagoon. Vegetation was scanty, and there seemed to be little or no animal life; many birds and insects, and a few lizards. The blue lagoon teemed with parti-colored fish, and the palms in their due time would drop cocoanuts; so much they could count on. They might, with good luck, snare some pigeons. Beyond that, the less thought about it the better.

Angier worked hard, before dark came upon them, to rig up a shelter for the girl. In time he hoped to do wonders with thatch,

he told her, dryly; just now she must stick to an oar-and-blanket device. At least, thanks to his plunder of matches, they could have a fire. They ate their supper beside the little blaze of brush. Not since dawn had either one mentioned the *Owara*. They took the catastrophe for granted, as the warp on which they must weave their strange and painful pattern. They assumed it callously, as one assumes the basal condition of life—the climate, or one's Caucasian blood. Slowly, in their spasmodic talk, they staked out the little dominion of their present—expedients for netting fish, for catching rain-water, for rigging up a signal. With the air of a chancellor of the exchequer, Miss Lambert promised a petticoat for the common weal. As they planned and Angier smoked, full-length by the fire, Persis Lambert drew a ribbon from her pocket, and, measuring it carefully, she knotted it about a ring she took from her finger, then hung the ring round her neck.

"Why is that?" The man's voice seemed to rise up from beneath the sand.

"It's a pearl. I mustn't get it wet."

"Wouldn't it be safer in one of my pockets?"

"I think not. See—I put it under everything."

"Why not wrap it up and bury it? It's no protected life you're going to live."

"Thanks, no. It's my engagement ring."

"Oh ——" This time the voice seemed to sink into the sand hollow where the man's head rested.

"I'm going to bed," said Persis Lambert at last. "What are you going to do? You've given me all the blankets."

"What of it?" Angier sprang to a sitting position. "There are only three, two for your shelter and one to cover you with. I have my overcoat. And sand isn't hard. Better than the boat, anyhow."

"Aren't the nights cool in the tropics?"

"I'm not a class in geography! It was devilishly hot last night, rowing. That's all I know. Anything I can do for you?"

"No." She disappeared into the shelter. It had been braced so far as possible against the strong sea-breeze.

Half an hour later Miss Lambert came out. Angier, who had been dozing by the dying fire, was now sitting up and drinking from his flask. His teeth chattered against the cup. She looked at him gravely. "Have you any medicines?"

"No."

"Nor I. So I think you'd better not get a chill first off. Why don't you build up the fire?"

"I don't precisely feel like starting out for more fire-wood. Besides, it's going to rain. Do get along in there and don't bother me —unless you're cold. Are you?" He pulled himself up to his feet slowly and stood before her.

"No, I'm not." She paused an instant, then went on in her coldest tone: "What good there is in the shelter I think you have as much right to as I. When we achieve thatch houses, it will be different. I should be much obliged if you would get out of the sea-wind, too."

"If you would take a little of that damned hostility out of your voice, I would!"

Miss Lambert looked surprised. "Didn't we decide all that sort of thing in the boat? I don't suppose this is pleasant for either of us." Great drops fell on her forehead. "Is this likely to be a hard storm?" she asked, hastily.

"How do I know? I'm no meteorologist." There was enough in his own tone of the "damned hostility" of which he had complained.

Miss Lambert laughed—a very tired tinkle of a laugh. "No; neither one of us is exactly the person the other would have chosen to be cast away with. We're both tenderfeet. I rather wonder what you used to do for a living. Listen"—the drops came faster and faster, and the swish of the palm-leaves high above their heads grew shriller and wilder—"I don't know you at all. So far as I do know you, I certainly don't like you." Even the beat of her words grew quicker, like all the audible rhythms of the world about them, whipped up, accelerated by the wind. "You create in me a positive aversion. But your strength is the only thing either of us

has to depend on. So you will come into the shelter. It's sufficiently open to the sky as it is. I intend to sleep, and I probably shouldn't if I knew you were rotting in the rain outside. If you wish me to take the space nearest the blanket"—she pointed at the seaward screen—"I will."

"I think that may turn out to be the wettest spot of all—since the wind is that way and we don't have much to weight the rug with," he answered. "I think I'll take it myself. If I find I'm keeping at all dry, I'll ask you to change."

He followed her and flung himself down in the indicated spot, on the carpet of leaves and brush he had earlier in the evening strewn hastily over the sandy soil. Presently both slept.

Six weeks to a day was the duration of Angier's and Persis Lambert's stay on their island. But six actual weeks, with a possible future of years, means a lifetime as complete as many that consider themselves rounded to the full sum of human experience. The intensity of an existence that is limited to itself is something few of us can conceive—we who are free to brood on the past and hope for the future, whose days are mere portals looking two ways. Neither one discussed a past life in which the other had no share; and their talk of the future stopped at a possible rescue. By some common instinct, mutually reinforced, they refrained from narrative. At the end of their exile Persis Lambert was still ignorant of Angier's business in life, as he was ignorant of the name of her fiancé. The girl's frankly stated aversion to the man doubtless dried up the springs of confidential talk in her—and, by natural result, in him. Anecdote sometimes drifted their way: an analogy out of past experience or an allusion to a book the one or the other had read. But they played a game of which would reveal the less. They bounded their world, as rigidly as children, by the fringe of sand beneath the circle of palms.

And all the while, precisely as if they were children, whose intimate confidences are all objective, immediate, and innocent of moral import, their intimacy grew. By a curious inversion of experience

they came to speak naturally of things that, in years of conventional acquaintance, would never have been mentioned. What the merest friend at home might have known about either was jealously concealed, while the little details, which scarce anything but the closest relation would have brought to free discussion, came vividly and frequently into their talk. It was as if the outer walls were defended while the enemy chaffered quietly in the market-place. Necessity, which drove them to be "sensible," could not drive them to be friends. They seemed to vent their private rage at their plight by being squeamish over things Mrs. Grundy could never have objected to—as if the last resort of dignity lay in being squeamish over something, no matter what. If they had to speak of their digestions, they would never divulge their home addresses! They should have been Adam and Eve at their housekeeping; instead, they were still Miss Lambert and Mr. Angier in Eden. Eden is used metaphorically, to be sure; for the resources of their island were scantier than those of the Seventh Day. Therefore there were painful hours over tasks that in Eden would have been mere play among the roses. They struggled experimentally for food and shelter, working out, with bent brows, the evolution of early periods, achieving in a hard day what neolithic centuries had gone to discovering. When they laughed, it was the grim laughter of the stone age—at the fish clumsily speared, or the ripe cocoanut floating out to sea. But if Persis Lambert wept in secret, the tears she shed had taken all history to produce. A strange working of inhibitions, in a land that had never heard the word or seen the thing.

Needless to say, it was the girl who set their psychic pace. More than once Angier bit off in the very utterance some speech that had tried for freedom—his silence following hard upon the chill tightening of her lips. Yet she was not ungracious or taciturn; only clinging desperately, one would have said, to some privacy of the mind. Of the physical privacy which every woman takes for granted, she had next to none, "sensible" as she had promised to be. She could not have accused Angier, had she wished, of limiting it voluntarily; but circumstances did the job as completely as if he had been a

brute. The tropic showers that flung them huddled in their blankets against the same tall palm-trunk; the necessary coöperation in all tasks, since her slender, ignorant hands must ever be guided by his; the night-terror that often made her rise and creep where she could hear his breathing; always a measure of the sordid talk of a hand-to-mouth existence, where one of the hundred forms of death rises up ever to dwarf any more delicate danger—every fact of every hour seemed to make them more one than wedlock. The man saw to it that she should have her due share of solitude, but her solitude on such terms was scarcely worth the name. It shrieked the bodily fact of him back at her from whatever point of the compass he had taken to.

Once Angier suggested that they should try the boat again, and seek a wider and more fertile exile. "This is too much like rats in a hole. Pretty soon we shall get the stink of those fish we are drying clear across the lagoon."

"You can go if you like," she said. "I will wait for you."

"Oh! . . . and if I never come back?"

"I shouldn't be worse off, should I?"

The man's face twitched slightly. "Permit me to believe that you would."

"Of course I should," she said perfunctorily. "But I won't go. I will never get into that boat again—never."

"You have a lot of grit but, I should say, no sense." With that Angier dropped the subject.

One night Persis Lambert woke—suddenly, out of a sound, dog-tired sleep. Something was near her, in the dark, an indistinct shape bending over her. Almost immediately she knew it for Angier, and closed her eyes again, quietly waiting, every muscle and cord tense under her blanket. Soon he rose noiselessly from his kneeling position and walked slowly away. He did not go back to his own sleeping-place, but moved off through the palm-grove towards the lagoon. As soon as she judged him out of earshot, she rose and followed him, tracking him through the moonlight, furtively

She saw him walk down the little shore to the lagoon and lie down full-length, hiding his face on his arms.

She did what he had done a few minutes before—knelt down and bent over him. But though he was awake, he was not aware of her, as a thick sob told her. Careless, therefore, she bent still closer. It did not occur to her that she was eavesdropping—they were as cruelly close as that! But no words came, only the sobs, worse than words. She pressed so near—though still not touching him—that her ring, hanging from its ribbon, swung lightly against his face. She pulled it away, but he had felt it, and sprang to his feet, facing her in the moonlight. The little lagoon rippled softly beside them.

"You devil!" he cried. "Why did you follow me?"

"Why did you wake me?"

"I didn't wake you."

"Then I didn't follow you."

Silently they walked back to their palm-grove. As they separated, she paused an instant and looked at him. Then she dug her wrists into the deep sockets of her eyes. Blurred by the gesture, she saw him only dimly.

"I'm sorry," she whispered.

"Oh, damn you . . ." he murmured, with a curious, meditative inflection, and walked away. She did not watch him further, but went back to her bed and slept.

Neither one alluded, in the days that followed, to the incident of that night. Their eyes were clear of illusion, their talk as sterile as ever. On the fifth day after, deliverance came in the shape of a government patrol-boat doing pacific duty among the islands. The signal, religiously kept afloat, was an easy mark for binoculars that steadily raked the horizon for any sign of trouble.

Their return to the world was as swift and inevitable as their departure from the *Owara*. Persis Lambert stood on the strip of sand, watching the boat rowed shoreward by vigorous sailors. When it was within a few rods of them she turned to look for Angier, who had disappeared from her side.

"Is he leaving it to me—the cad?" she whispered to herself. But

he returned from the camp in time to greet the under-officer who sprang from the gunwale to the sand in high excitement. Miss Lambert, after a grave greeting, left all explanations to Angier. He made them very well, then suddenly fell silent, his eyes fixed on the dwindling coronet of palms. Miss Lambert, her back to Angier and the young officer, strained her glance towards the little steamer. Once on it, she went below to quarters hurriedly arranged for her; and when, some hours afterward, she came on deck again, the island of their six weeks' sojourn was lost forever in the dusk and distance.

Angier approached her the next morning. "They seem to think we have a lot to say to each other. As a matter of fact, we haven't. But I might tell you that they are taking us on to a port of call of the *Wallaby,* going to Singapore. We shall just about make it in time to catch her. We ought to be on board her tomorrow."

Miss Lambert nodded. "Have you any money?" she asked.

"Quite enough to go on with."

"I saved a lot, you know. At least, I suppose a letter of credit is still good."

"I think you'll find so—in spite of everything."

"I wish you would tell me how much you have."

"Is that the kind of thing I ever have told you? Why should I begin now?"

"As you like." She turned her head away from him.

"I'm sorry, by the way, about your aunt. . . ."

Persis Lambert's eyes filled. "That's all right. I mean, you've said all you need to say. Do you think they really know?"

"It seems to be their business to know everything that happens in this archipelago. I think they pretty well live up to it. I'm afraid there's no doubt. The first two boats were overloaded. . . . Rotten discipline." He walked away.

The next morning they transhipped quickly in a lurid tropic harbor; and Persis Lambert took possession of a stateroom from which, for three days, she did not stir. When, braced to face the world again—a world whose thousand curious eyes she had felt

burning through the very decks to reach her as she lay in her berth —she disposed herself nonchalantly in a deck-chair, a steward brought her a note. So oddly had the two inverted the natural course of experience that she felt Angier had taken a liberty in writing to her. The liberty taken was slight, however, and this she freely admitted after a glance. It was a single line to inform her that he was to leave the steamer at the next port. He must have landed the night before. She remembered objecting, as she tried to drowse, to the noises of landing—the hurrying feet, the unintelligible native babel, the scraping and pounding and shouting before the dinghy went ashore.

Persis Lambert rose and went to the deck rail. The torn bits of the note fluttered over the side. Then she came back to face the congested curiosity of a portly Dutchwoman who had been stalking her for three days.

Summer was heavy on the big town, but Miss Lambert still lingered behind shuttered windows, in a world of brown holland and shadows. Her stepsister, with her own family, had left for the mountains. Miss Lambert would follow, she said, when she could; and the old caretaker and his wife would meanwhile suffice to her service. Mrs. Bayle supposed she knew why Persis stayed on; Tony Wainwright was still in town, working on gigantic plans for some competition or other. After poor Persis's harrowing adventure, it must be good to breathe the metropolitan dust and build up her nerves on Tony's devotion. Persis had not said precisely that; but for all Persis ever said——!

Miss Lambert had seen her betrothed many times in the crowded weeks since her return. She had not particularly sought chances to see him alone. She had taken his and her and every one's engagements as they came. But if Tony Wainwright had had the instinct to complain, he should by rights have stifled it, for in planning to stay on after the family, Miss Lambert gave him promise of ample time to have her quite to himself.

She had, in point of fact, seen him quite alone several times; yet

she prepared for him this afternoon as if it were their first reunion after her long and eventful absence. She began to speak to him at once, indeed, on a new, strange note—a note, had he but known it, tempered under the Southern Cross.

"Tony, it can't be."

"What can't be, my darling?"

"This—any of it. I stayed on to tell you. Nothing makes any difference—not even being quite alone with you. I have waited to see. Now I know."

"But *what?*" He focused his eyes on her keenly as she stood near him in the shadows, a frail, pale figure with waving outlines.

"I can't marry you."

"May I open the shutters?" He moved to the windows. "I'd like a little light on this."

"If you think His Satanic Majesty, the sun, is going to help you," she murmured.

"Why shouldn't he?"

"I've seen him at home, remember."

In the rich afternoon light they faced each other, still standing among the wan masses of the shrouded furniture.

"Look here, Persis, what is all this about? Anything to do with that rotten voyage?"

She did not answer at once.

"Or with that man—Angier?"

"Yes, everything to do with him."

"You're in love with him?" He dropped into a chair, put his elbows on his knees and his chin on his hands.

"Try not to be stupid, Tony. To the best of my recollection, I detested him."

"You've praised him highly."

"Yes? I'm glad of that, for I think he deserved it. I should have scarcely expected myself to do my duty in that way, though."

"Well, then. . . . Have you heard from him?" Tony Wainwright, in the presence of a problem, could not, for the life of him,

help behaving like a lawyer. His tones were so like other tones Persis Lambert had heard from him that she smiled a little.

"Heard from him? Never. What do you take me for?"

"I don't see why you shouldn't."

"I fancy he sees. But that isn't the point." She sat down, herself, then. "What I have to say, Tony, is very simple—or it would be simple if you weren't likely to think it preposterous. The honest fact is that I can't marry any one. I feel like a widow, if you want to know."

He was silent for a moment. "I see." Then he got up and walked to the chimney-piece.

"I'd be willing to wager a good deal that you don't see." Her voice was hard as porcelain with a wonderful glaze.

"I tell you I detested him. For that matter, I don't know why. He behaved with exceeding consideration throughout. He rose out of a nightmare and went away into a nightmare, and in between he did everything he could for me. I know nothing about him—who he is, or where he came from, or where he has gone. If either one of us can help it, I am quite sure we shall never meet again. That is the whole history of *that.*"

"What is there, then?"

"Quite simply this: that I feel as if I had been married to him and I'm quite incapable of marrying again."

"But why?"

"Try it yourself, Tony! Six weeks—they tell me it was six weeks, but it was the longest lifetime I've ever lived—of complete isolation on a naked coral island with a man you've never seen before. Nothing between you and him—nothing. As lonely we were as the first man and woman; and for all I knew, it might go on forever. You've never experienced an intimacy like that. Compared with us, you and I are strangers. I can't describe it. . . . Night after night, the only thing that stood between me and dying of fear was the sound of his breathing. Time after time his body kept mine from being soaked, flesh and bone, with rain. I mended his clothes with a sharpened thorn, and we huddled under the same

thatch to keep off the horrible sun. There has never been anything like it. I never dreamed of living such a life with you. And"—her voice grew thin, disdainful, remote—"I disliked him."

"Do you dislike me?" Wainwright asked curiously.

"I am exceedingly fond of you. But I have a horror of marriage. I have a horror of ever again being intimate with any human creature. I can't do it; and that's the end of it."

"Damn him!" said Wainwright, under his breath.

"You needn't damn him. He did his best. And I did mine. But we were flung on that sand to root for existence like two animals. Every nerve in me has been violated. I never wish to face a single reality of life again. To be a wife would be more than I could bear."

"We'll talk of it again." Tony Wainwright, with almost superhuman composure, started towards the door. "You have always been hypersensitive, and now, my poor darling, you are ill. It has been too much for you. It will take time, and I shan't hurry you. You're right about that. I knew something was up, but I imagined it was just the beastly reaction after such a time. I dare say I'd better leave you now. When may I come again?"

She rested her eyes on him tenderly. "Whenever you like, so long as you understand that we're not engaged."

He took a step towards her. "Persis, I can't go away like this. You snap a thread and blow me down the wind. You must let me have it out with you when you're rested, when you're calmer."

"Am I not calm?"

"Not sanely calm, no."

"Then I never shall be."

"I don't believe that, dear." He bent over her and touched her hair very lightly. "I'll come tomorrow, earlier." She did not look up, but he bent no nearer. In a moment he straightened himself, drawing a deep breath. "Wasn't he in love with you, Persis?"

She started slightly as if she had heard something other than words—as if, across half the earth, the faint ripple of a lagoon could

sound faintly and die away. "No, Tony, I am quite sure that he wasn't."

"Could you have told? He must have been, dear."

"I could have told. He wasn't."

"And I may come tomorrow?" He took her hand.

Gently, Persis Lambert worked her hand free. "Surely, you may come whenever you will—if you understand that it's over."

"And you are all to win again? Oh, Persis, Persis! But you're worth it, darling, and I'll never say a word too much. I'll serve seven years if I must."

"It won't take you years to find out the truth." She shook her head at him as he turned on the threshold to look back. "You'll get no more of it from me, ever, than you've had this afternoon."

By old habit she went to the window to watch him come out. The same habit made him lift his face. She blew him a kiss, and stood there until he was out of sight. "That is the last thing I shall ever do for any man," she said, aloud, as she turned away from the window.

TOL'ABLE DAVID

By

JOSEPH HERGESHEIMER

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TOL'ABLE DAVID made one of the best moving pictures that have yet been filmed in this country. The dramatic action, the picturesque setting, and the appealing personality of the young hero combined to produce a veritable screen hit.

JOSEPH HERGESHEIMER is considered by some critics to be the greatest living American writer of fiction.

He was born in Philadelphia, of Pennsylvania Presbyterian stock. As a child his health was delicate and his schooling was desultory. He spent some time at the Quaker School in Philadelphia, and later he attended, though irregularly, the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts.

At the death of his grandfather he inherited some money, which he at once spent in a visit to Venice. Though this would seem to have been highly improvident, the experience must have developed his appreciation of form and color, which is so evident in all his work.

In 1900 he bought a typewriter and began to practise story writing. Like Stevenson and Booth Tarkington, he served a long apprenticeship; but when *The Lay Anthony* appeared in 1914, he took a respected place in American fiction.

Mr. Hergesheimer is known for the aesthetic qualities of his work. In no other writer do we find the same wealth of sensory impression; color is lavishly but delightfully spread upon his pages. Many of his books show a careful study of definite periods in American history, and reflect richly whatever was colorful and picturesque in them.

His best novels are *Java Head, Linda Condon, The Three Black Pennys, The Bright Shawl,* and *Balisand.* His three volumes of short stories are entitled *Gold and Iron, The Happy End,* and *Quiet Cities.*

TOL'ABLE DAVID

By Joseph Hergesheimer

I

HE WAS the younger of two brothers, in his sixteenth year; and he had his father's eyes—a tender and idyllic blue. There, however, the obvious resemblance ended. The elder's azure gaze was set in a face scarred and riven by hardship, debauch and disease; he had been—before he had inevitably returned to the mountains where he was born—a brakeman in the lowest stratum of the corruption of small cities on big railroads; and his thin stooped body, his gaunt head and uncertain hands, all bore the stamp of ruinous years. But in the midst of this his eyes, like David's, retained their singularly tranquil color of sweetness and innocence.

David was the youngest, the freshest thing imaginable; he was overtall and gawky, his cheeks were as delicately rosy as apple blossoms, and his smile was an epitome of ingenuous interest and frank wonder. It was as if some quality of especial fineness, lingering unspotted in Hunter Kinemon, had found complete expression in his son David. A great deal of this certainly was due to his mother, a thick, solid woman, who retained more than a trace of girlish beauty when she stood back, flushed from the heat of cooking, or, her bright eyes snapping, tramped with heavy pails from the milking shed on a winter morning.

Both the Kinemon boys were engaging. Allen, almost twenty-one, was, of course, the more conspicuous; he was called the strongest youth in Greenstream County. He had his mother's brown eyes; a deep bony box of a chest; rippling shoulders; and a broad peaceful countenance. He drove the Crabapple stage, between Crabapple, the village just over the back mountain, and

Beaulings, in West Virginia. It was twenty-six miles from point to point, a way that crossed a towering range, hung above a far veil of unbroken spruce, forded swift glittering streams, and followed a road that passed rare isolated dwellings, dominating rocky and precarious patches and hills of cultivation. One night Allen slept in Beaulings; the next he was home, rising at four o'clock in order to take his stage out of Crabapple at seven sharp.

It was a splendid job, and brought them thirty-five dollars a month; not in mere trade at the store, but actual money. This, together with Hunter Kinemon's position, tending the rich bottom farm of State Senator Galt, gave them a position of ease and comfort in Greenstream. They were a very highly esteemed family.

Galt's farm was in grazing; it extended in deep green pastures and sparkling water between two high mountainous walls drawn across east and west. In the morning the rising sun cast long delicate shadows on one side; at evening the shadow troops lengthened across the emerald valley from the other. The farmhouse occupied a fenced clearing on the eastern rise, with a gray huddle of barn and sheds below, a garden patch of innumerable bean poles, and an incessant stir of snowy chickens. Beyond, the cattle moved in sleek chestnut-brown and orange herds; and farther out flocks of sheep shifted like gray-white clouds on a green-blue sky.

It was, Mrs. Kinemon occasionally complained, powerful lonely, with the store two miles up the road, Crabapple over a heft of a rise, and no personable neighbors; and she kept a loaded rifle in an angle of the kitchen when the men were all out in a distant pasturage. But David liked it extremely well; he liked riding an old horse after the steers, the all-night sap boilings in spring groves, the rough path across a rib of the mountain to school.

Nevertheless, he was glad when studying was over for the year. It finished early in May, on account of upland planting, and left David with a great many weeks filled only with work that seemed to him unadulterated play. Even that didn't last all the time; there were hours when he could fish for trout, plentiful in cool rocky pools, or shoot gray squirrels in the towering maples. Then, of

evenings, he could listen to Allen's thrilling tales of the road, of the gambling and fighting among the lumbermen in Beaulings, or of strange people that had taken passage in the Crabapple stage—drummers, for the most part, with impressive diamond rings and the doggonedest lies imaginable. But they couldn't fool Allen, however believing he might seem. . . . The Kinemons were listening to such a recital by their eldest son now.

They were gathered in a room of very general purpose. It had a rough board floor and crumbling plaster walls, and held a large scarred cherry bed with high posts and a gayly quilted cover; a long couch, covered with yellow untanned sheepskins; a primitive telephone; some painted wooden chairs; a wardrobe, lurching insecurely forward; and an empty iron stove with a pipe let into an original open hearth with a wide rugged stone. Beyond, a door opened into the kitchen, and back of the bed a raw unguarded flight of steps led up to the peaked space where Allen and David slept.

Hunter Kinemon was extended on the couch, his home-knitted socks comfortably free of shoes, smoking a sand-stone pipe with a reed stem. Mrs. Kinemon was seated in a rocking-chair with a stained and torn red plush cushion, that moved with a thin complaint on a fixed base. Allen was over against the stove, his corduroy trousers thrust into greased laced boots, and a black cotton shirt open on a chest and throat like pink marble. And David supported his lanky length, in a careless and dust-colored garb, with a capacious hand on the oak beam of the mantel.

It was May, school had stopped, and a door was open on a warm still dusk. Allen's tale had come to an end; he was pinching the ear of a diminutive dog—like a fat white sausage with wire-thin legs and a rat tail—that never left him. The smoke from the elder Kinemon's pipe rose in a tranquil cloud. Mrs. Kinemon rocked vigorously, with a prolonged wail of the chair springs. "I got to put some tallow to that chair," Kinemon proclaimed.

"The house on Elbow Barren's took," Allen told him suddenly—"the one just off the road. I saw smoke in the chimney this evening."

A revival of interest, a speculation, followed this announcement.

"Any women'll get to the church," Mr. Kinemon asserted. "I wonder? Did a person say who were they?"

"I asked; but they're strange to Crabapple. I heard this though: there weren't any women to them—just men—father and sons like. I drew up right slow going by; but nobody passed out a word. It's a middling bad farm place—rocks and berry bushes. I wouldn't reckon much would be content there."

David walked out through the open doorway and stood on the small covered portico, that with a bench on each side, hung to the face of the dwelling. The stars were brightening in the sky above the confining mountain walls; there was a tremendous shrilling of frogs; the faint clamor of a sheep bell. He was absolutely, irresponsibly happy. He wished the time would hurry when he'd be big and strong like Allen, and get out into the absorbing stir of the world.

II

He was dimly roused by Allen's departure in the beginning brightness of the following morning. The road over which the stage ran drew by the rim of the farm; and later David saw the rigid three-seated surrey, the leather mail bags strapped in the rear, trotted by under the swinging whip of his brother. He heard the faint sharp bark of Rocket, Allen's dog, braced at his side.

David spent the day with his father, repairing the fencing of the middle field, swinging a mall and digging post holes; and at evening his arms ached. But he assured himself he was not tired; any brother of Allen's couldn't give in before such insignificant effort. When Hunter Kinemon turned back toward house and supper David made a wide circle, ostensibly to see whether there was rock salt enough out for the cattle, but in reality to express his superabundant youth, staying qualities and unquenchable vivid interest in every foot of the valley.

He saw the meanest kind of old fox, and marked what he thought

might be its hole; his flashing gaze caught the obscure distant retreat of ground hogs; he threw a contemptuous clod at the woolly-brained sheep; and with a bent willow shoot neatly looped a trout out upon the grassy bank. As a consequence of all this he was late for supper, and sat at the table with his mother, who never took her place until the men—yes, and boys of her family—had satisfied their appetites. The dark came on and she lighted a lamp swinging under a tin reflector from the ceiling. The kitchen was an addition, and had a sloping shed roof, board sides, a polished stove, and a long table with a red cloth.

His father, David learned, attacking a plateful of brown chicken swimming with greens and gravy, was having another bad spell. He had the familiar sharp pain through his back, and his arms hurt him.

"He can't be drove to a doctor," the woman told David, speaking, in her concern, as if to an equal in age and comprehension.

David had grown accustomed to the elder's periods of suffering; they came, twisted his father's face into deep lines, departed, and things were exactly as before—or very nearly the same. The boy saw that Hunter Kinemon couldn't support labor that only two or three years before he would have finished without conscious effort. David resolutely ignored this; he felt that it must be a cause of shame, unhappiness, to his father; and he never mentioned it to Allen.

Kinemon lay very still on the couch; his pipe, beside him on the floor, had spilled its live core, burning into a length of rag carpet. His face, hung with shadows like the marks of a sooty finger, was glistening with fine sweat. Not a whisper of complaint passed his dry lips. When his wife approached he attempted to smooth out his corrugated countenance. His eyes, as tenderly blue as flowers, gazed at her with a faint masking of humor.

"This is worse'n usual," she said sharply. "And I ain't going to have you fill yourself with any more of that patent trash. You don't spare me by not letting on. I can tell as soon as you're miserable.

David can fetch the doctor from Crabapple to-night if you don't look better."

"But I am," he assured her. "It's just a comeback of an old ache. There was a power of heavy work to that fence."

"You'll have to get more to help you," she continued. "That Galt'll let you kill yourself and not turn a hand. He can afford a dozen. I don't mind housing and cooking for them. David's only tol'able for lifting, too, while he's growing."

"Why," David protested, "it ain't just nothing what I do. I could do twice as much. I don't believe Allen could helt more'n me when he was sixteen. It ain't just nothing at all."

He was disturbed by this assault upon his manhood; if his muscles were still a little stringy it was surprising what he could accomplish with them. He would show her to-morrow.

"And," he added impetuously, "I can shoot better than Allen right now. You ask him if I can't. You ask him what I did with that cranky twenty-two last Sunday up on the mountain."

His clear gaze sought her, his lean face quivered with anxiety to impress, convince her of his virility, skill. His jaw was as sharp as the blade of a hatchet. She studied him with a new surprised concern.

"David!" she exclaimed. "For a minute you had the look of a man. A real steady look, like your father. Don't you grow up too fast, David," she directed him, in an irrepressible maternal solicitude. "I want a boy—something young—round a while yet."

Hunter Kinemon sat erect and reached for his pipe. The visible strain of his countenance had been largely relaxed. When his wife had left the room for a moment he admitted to David:

"That was a hard one. I thought she had me that time."

The elder's voice was light, steady. The boy gazed at him with intense admiration. He felt instinctively that nothing mortal could shake the other's courage. And, on top of his mother's complimentary surprise, his father had confided in him, made an admission that, David realized, must be kept from fretting women. He couldn't have revealed more to Allen himself.

He pictured the latter swinging magnificently into Beaulings, cracking the whip over the horses' ears, putting on the grinding brake before the post-office. No one, even in that town of reckless drinking, ever tried to down Allen; he was as ready as he was strong. He had charge of Government mail and of passengers; he carried a burnished revolver in a holster under the seat at his hand. Allen would kill anybody who interfered with him. So would he —David—if a man edged up on him or on his family; if any one hurt even a dog of his, his own dog, he'd shoot him.

An inextinguishable hot pride, a deep sullen intolerance, rose in him at the thought of an assault on his personal liberty, his rights, or on his connections and belongings. A deeper red burned in his fresh young cheeks; his smiling lips were steady; his candid blue eyes, ineffably gentle, gazed widely against the candlelit gloom where he was making his simple preparations for bed. The last feeling of which he was conscious was a wave of sharp admiration, of love, for everything and everybody that constituted his home.

III

Allen, on his return the following evening, immediately opened an excited account of the new family, with no women, on the place by Elbow Barren.

"I heard they were from down hellwards on the Clinch," he repeated; "and then that they'd come from Kentucky. Anyway, they're bad. Ed Arbogast just stepped on their place for a pleasant howdy, and some one on the stoop hollered for him to move. Ed, he saw the shine on a rifle barrel, and went right along up to the store. Then they hired Simmons—the one that ain't good in his head—to cut out bush; and Simmons trailed home after a while with the side of his face all tore, where he'd been hit with a piece of board. Simmons' brother went and asked them what was it about; and one of the Hatburns—that's their name—said he'd busted the loony just because!"

"What did Simmons answer back?" Hunter Kinemon demanded, his coffee cup suspended.

"Nothing much; he'd law them, or something like that. The Simmonses are right spindling; they don't belong in Greenstream either." David commented: "I wouldn't have et a thing till I'd got them!" In the ruddy reflection of the lamp his pink-and-blue charm, his shy lips, resembled a pastoral divinity of boyhood. Allen laughed.

"That family, the Hatburns——" He paused. "Why, they'd just mow you down with the field daisies."

David flushed with annoyance. He saw his mother studying him with the attentive concern she had first shown the day before yesterday.

"You have no call to mix in with them," Kinemon told his elder son. "Drive stage and mind your business. I'd even step aside a little from folks like that."

A sense of surprised disappointment invaded David at his father's statement. It seemed to him out of keeping with the elder's courage and determination. It, too, appeared almost spindling. Perhaps he had said it because his wife, a mere woman, was there. He was certain that Allen would not agree with such mildness. The latter, lounging back from the table, narrowed his eyes; his fingers played with the ears of his dog, Rocket. Allen gave his father a cigar and lit one himself, a present from a passenger on the stage. David could see a third in Allen's shirt pocket, and he longed passionately for the day when he would be old enough to have a cigar offered him. He longed for the time when he, like Allen, would be swinging a whip over the horses of a stage, rumbling down a steep mountain, or walking up at the team's head to take off some weight.

Where the stage line stopped in Beaulings the railroad began. Allen, he knew, intended in the fall to give up the stage for the infinitely wider world of freight cars; and David wondered whether Priest, the storekeeper in Crabapple who had charge of the awarding of the position, could be brought to see that he was as able a driver, almost, as Allen.

It was probable Priest would call him too young for the charge of the Government mail. But he wasn't; Allen had to admit that he, David, was the straighter shot. He wouldn't step aside for any Hatburn alive. And, he decided, he would smoke nothing but cigars. He considered whether he might light his small clay pipe, concealed under the stoop, before the family; but reluctantly concluded that that day had not yet arrived.

Allen passed driving the next morning as usual, leaving a gray wreath of dust to settle back into the tranquil yellow sunshine; the sun moved from the east barrier to the west; a cool purple dusk filled the valley, and the shrilling of the frogs rose to meet the night. The following day was almost identical—the shadows swept out, shortened under the groves of trees and drew out again over the sheep on the western slope. Before Allen reached home he had to feed and bed his horses, and walk back the two miles over the mountain from Crabapple; and a full hour before the time for his brother's arrival, David was surprised to see the stage itself making its way over the precarious turf that led up to the Kinemons' dwelling.

He was standing by the portico, and immediately his mother moved out to his side, as if subconsciously disturbed by the unusual occurrence. David saw, while the stage was still diminutive against the rolling pasture, that Allen was not driving; and there was an odd confusion of figures in a rear seat. Mrs. Kinemon said at once, in a shrill strange voice:

"Something has happened to Allen!" She pressed her hands against her laboring breast; David ran forward and met the surrey as it came through the fence opening by the stable shed. Ed Arbogast was driving; and a stranger—a drummer evidently—in a white-and-black check suit, was holding Allen, crumpled in a dreadful bloody faint.

"Where's Hunter?" Arbogast asked the boy.

"There he comes now," David replied, his heart pounding wildly and dread constricting his throat.

Hunter Kinemon and his wife reached the stage at the same

moment. Both were plaster-white; but the woman was shaking with frightened concern, while her husband was deliberate and still.

"Help me carry him in to our bed," he addressed Ed Arbogast.

They lifted Allen out and bore him toward the house, his limp fingers, David saw, trailing through the grass. At first the latter involuntarily turned away; but, objurgating such cowardice, he forced himself to gaze at Allen. He recognized at once that his brother had not been shot; his hip was too smeared and muddy for that. It was, he decided, an accident, as Arbogast and the drummer led Hunter Kinemon aside.

David Kinemon walked resolutely up to the little group. His father gestured for him to go away, but he ignored the elder's command. He must know what had happened to Allen. The stranger in the checked suit was speaking excitedly, waving trembling hands—a sharp contrast to the grim immobility of the Greenstream men:

"He'd been talking about that family, driving out of Beaulings and saying how they had done this and that; and when we came to where they lived he pointed out the house. A couple of dark-favored men were working in a patch by the road, and he waved his whip at them, in a way of speaking; but they never made a sign. The horses were going slow then; and, for some reason or other, his little dog jumped to the road and ran in on the patch. Sirs, one of those men spit, stepped up to the dog, and kicked it into Kingdom Come."

David's hands clenched; and he drew in a sharp sobbing breath.

"This Allen," the other continued, "pulled in the team and drawed a gun from under the seat before I could move a hand. You can hear me—I wouldn't have kicked any dog of his for all the gold there is! He got down from the stage and started forward, and his face was black; then he stopped, undecided. He stood studying, with the two men watching him, one leaning careless on a grub hoe. Then, by heaven, he turned and rested the gun on the seat, and walked up to where laid the last of his dog. He picked it up, and says he:

" 'Hatburn, I got Government mail on that stage to get in under contract, and there's a passenger too—paid to Crabapple; but when I get them two things done I'm coming back to kill you two dead to hear the last trumpet.'

"The one on the hoe laughed; but the other picked up a stone like my two fists and let Allen have it in the back. It surprised him like; he stumbled forward, and the other stepped out and laid the hoe over his head. It missed him mostly, but enough landed to knock Allen over. He rolled into the ditch, like, by the road; and then Hatburn jumped down on him, deliberate, with lumbermen's irons in his shoes."

David was conscious of an icy flood pouring through him; a revulsion of grief and fury that blinded him. Tears welled over his fresh cheeks in an audible crying. But he was silenced by the aspect of his father. Hunter Kinemon's tender blue eyes had changed apparently into bits of polished steel; his mouth was pinched until it was only a line among the other lines and seaming of his worn face.

"I'd thank you to drive the stage into Crabapple, Ed," he said; "and if you see the doctor coming over the mountain—he's been rung up for—ask him, please sir, will he hurry." He turned and walked abruptly away, followed by David.

Allen lay under the gay quilt in the Kinemons' big bed. His stained clothes drooped from a chair where Mrs. Kinemon had flung them. Allen's face was like white paper; suddenly it had grown as thin and sharp as an old man's. Only a slight quiver of his eyelids showed that he was not dead.

Hunter Kinemon sat on the couch, obviously waiting for the doctor. He, too, looked queer, David thought. He wished his father would break the dreadful silence gathering over them; but the only sound was the stirring of the woman in the kitchen, boiling a pot of water. Allen moved and cried out in a knifelike agony, and a flicker of suffering passed over his father's face.

An intolerable hour dragged out before the doctor arrived; and then David was driven from the room. He sat outside on the

portico, listening to the passage of feet about Allen in a high shuddering protest. David's hands and feet were still cold, but he was conscious of an increasing stillness within, an attitude not unlike his father's. He held out an arm and saw that it was as steady as a beam of the stoop roof. He was without definite plan or knowledge of what must occur; but he told himself that any decision of Hunter Kinemon's must not exclude him.

There were four Hatburns; but two Kinemons were better; and he meant his father and himself, for he knew instinctively that Allen was badly hurt. Soon there would be no Hatburns at all. And then the law could do as it pleased. It seemed to David a long way from the valley, from Allen broken in bed, to the next term of court—September—in Crabapple. The Kinemons could protect, revenge, their own.

The doctor passed out, and David entered where his mother was bent above her elder son. Hunter Kinemon, with a blackened rag, was wiping the lock of an old but efficient repeating rifle. His motions were unhurried, careful. Mrs. Kinemon gazed at him with blanching lips, but she interposed no word. There was another rifle, David knew, in the long cupboard by the hearth; and he was moving to secure it when his father's voice halted him in the middle of the floor.

"You David," he said, "I want you to stop along here with your mother. It ain't fit for her to be left alone with Allen, and there's a mess of little things for doing. I want those cows milked dry, and catch in those little Dominicker chickens before that old gander eats them up."

David was about to protest, to sob out a passionate refusal, when a glimpse of his father's expression silenced him. He realized that the slightest argument would be worse than futile. There wasn't a particle of familiar feeling in the elder's voice; suddenly David was afraid of him. Hunter Kinemon slipped a number of heavily greased cartridges into the rifle's magazine. Then he rose and said:

"Well, Mattie?"

His wife laid her hand on his shoulder.

"Hunter," she told him, "you've been a mighty sweet and good husband." He drew his hand slowly and lovingly across her cheek.

"I'm sorry about this, Mattie," he replied; "I've been powerful happy along with you and all of us. David, be a likely boy." He walked out of the room, across the grass to the stable shed.

"He's going to drive to Elbow Barren," David muttered; "and he hadn't ought to have left me to tend the cows and chickens. That's for a woman to do. I ought to be right along with him facing down those Hatburns. I can shoot, and my hand is steady as his."

He stood in the doorway, waiting for the reappearance of his father with the roan horse to hitch to their old buggy. It didn't occur to David to wonder at the fact that the other was going alone to confront four men. The Kinemons had a mort of friends who would have gladly accompanied, assisted Hunter; but this, the boy told himself, was their own affair—their own pride.

From within came the sound of his mother, crying softly, and of Allen murmuring in his pain. David was appalled by the swift change that had fallen over them—the breaking up of his entire world, the shifting of every hope and plan. He was appalled and confused; the thoughtless unquestioning security of his boyhood had been utterly destroyed. He looked about dazed at the surrounding scene, callous in its total carelessness of Allen's injury, his haggard father with the rifle. The valley was serenely beautiful; doves were calling from the eaves of the barn; a hen clucked excitedly. The western sky was a single expanse of primrose on which the mountains were jagged and blue.

He had never known the elder to be so long getting the bridle on the roan; the buggy was drawn up outside. An uneasy tension increased within him—a pressing necessity to see his father leading out their horse. He didn't come, and finally David was forced to walk over to the shed.

The roan had been untied, and turned as the boy entered; but David, at first, failed to find Hunter Kinemon; then he almost

stepped on his hand. His father lay across a corner of the earthen floor, with the bridle tangled in stiff fingers, and his blue eyes staring blankly up.

David stifled an exclamation of dread, and forced himself to bend forward and touch the gray face. Only then he realized that he was looking at death. The pain in his father's back had got him at last! The rifle had been carefully placed against the wall; and, without realizing the significance of his act, David picked it up and laid the cold barrel against his rigid young body.

IV

On the evening after Hunter Kinemon's burial in the rocky steep graveyard above Crabapple, David and his mother sat, one on the couch, the other in her creaking rocking-chair, lost in heavy silence. Allen moved in a perpetual uneasy pain on the bed, his face drawn and fretful, and shadowed by a soft young beard. The wardrobe doors stood open, revealing a stripped interior; wooden chairs were tied back to back; and two trunks—one of mottled paper, the other of ancient leather—stood by the side of a willow basket filled with a miscellany of housekeeping objects.

What were left of the Kinemons were moving into a small house on the edge of Crabapple; Senator Galt had already secured another tenant for the care of his bottom acres and fat herds. The night swept into the room, fragrant and blue, powdered with stars; the sheep bells sounded in a faintly distant clashing; a whippoorwill beat its throat out against the piny dark.

An overpowering melancholy surged through David; though his youth responded to the dramatic, the tragic change that had enveloped them, at the same time he was reluctant to leave the farm, the valley with its trout and ground hogs, its fox holes and sap boilings. These feelings mingled in the back of his consciousness; his active thoughts were all directed toward the time when, with the rifle, the obligation that he had picked up practically from his dead

father's hand, he would walk up to the Hatburn place and take full payment for Allen's injury and their paternal loss.

He felt uneasily that he should have gone before this—at once; but there had been a multitude of small duties connected with the funeral, intimate things that could not be turned over to the kindest neighbors; and the ceremony itself, it seemed to him, should be attended by dignity and repose.

Now, however, it was over; and only his great duty remained, filling the entire threshold of his existence. He had no plan; only a necessity to perform. It was possible that he would fail—there were four Hatburns; and that chance depressed him. If he were killed there was no one else, for Allen could never take another step. That had been disclosed by the most casual examination of his injury. Only himself, David, remained to uphold the pride of the Kinemons.

He gazed covertly at his mother; she must not, certainly, be warned of his course; she was a woman, to be spared the responsibility borne by men. A feeling of her being under his protection, even advice, had grown within him since he had discovered the death in the stable shed. This had not changed his aspect of blossoming youth, the intense blue candor of his gaze; he sat with his knees bent boyishly, his immature hands locked behind his head.

An open wagon, piled with blankets, carried Allen to Crabapple, and Mrs. Kinemon and David followed in the buggy, a great bundle, folded in the bright quilt, roped behind. They soon crossed the range and dropped into a broader valley. Crabapple lay on a road leading from mountain wall to wall, the houses quickly thinning out into meadow at each end.

A cross-roads was occupied by three stores and the courthouse, a square red-brick edifice with a classic white portico and high lantern; and it was out from that, where the highway had degenerated into a sod-cut trail, that the future home of the Kinemons lay. It was a small somber frame dwelling, immediately on the road, with a rain-washed patch rising abruptly at the back. A

dilapidated shed on the left provided a meager shelter for the roan; and there was an aged and twisted apple tree over the broken pump.

"You'll have to get at that shed, David," his mother told him; "the first rain would drown anything inside."

She was settling Allen on the couch with the ragged sheepskin. So he would; but there was something else to attend to first. He would walk over to Elbow Barren to-morrow. He involuntarily laid his hand on the barrel of the rifle, temporarily leaned against a table, when his mother spoke sharply from an inner doorway.

"You David," she said; "come right out into the kitchen."

There he stood before her, with his gaze stubbornly fixed on the bare floor, his mouth tight shut.

"David," she continued, her voice now lowered, fluctuating with anxiety, "you weren't reckoning on paying off them Hatburns? You never?" She halted, gazing at him intently. "Why, they'd shoot you up in no time! You are nothing but a ——"

"You can call me a boy if you've a mind to," he interrupted; "and maybe the Hatburns'll kill me—and maybe they won't. But there's no one can hurt Allen like that and go plumb, sniggering free; not while I can move and hold a gun."

"I saw a look to you that was right manlike a week or two back," she replied; "and I said to myself: 'There's David growing up overnight.' I favored it, too, though I didn't want to lose you that way so soon. And only last night I said again: 'Thank God, David's a man in his heart, for all his pretty cheeks!' I thought I could build on you, with me getting old and Allen never taking a mortal step. Priest would give you a place, and glad, in the store—the Kinemons are mighty good people. I had it all fixed up like that, how we'd live here and pay regular.

"Oh, I didn't say nothing to your father when he started out—he was too old to change; but I hoped you would be different. I hoped you would forget your own feeling, and see Allen there on his back, and me . . . getting along. You're all we got, David. It's no use, I reckon; you'll go like Allen and Hunter, full up with

your own pride and never ——" She broke off, gazing bitterly at her hands folded in her calico lap.

A new trouble filled David's heart. Through the open doorway he could see Allen, twisting on the couch; his mother was older, more worn, than he had realized. She had failed a great deal in the past few days. She was suddenly stripped of her aspect of authority, force; suddenly she appeared negative, dependent. A sharp pity for her arose through his other contending emotions.

"I don't know how you figure you will be helping Allen by stepping off to be shot instead of putting food in his mouth," she spoke again. "He's got nobody at all but you, David."

That was so; and yet ——

"How can I let those skunks set their hell on us?" he demanded passionately. "Why, all Greenstream will think I'm afraid, that I let the Hatburns bust Allen and kill my father. I couldn't stand up in Priest's store; I couldn't bear to look at anybody. Don't you understand how men are about those things?"

She nodded.

"I can see, right enough—with Hunter in the graveyard and Allen with both hips broke. What I can't see is what we'll do next winter; how we'll keep Allen warm and fed. I suppose we can go to the County Home."

But that, David knew, was as disgraceful as the other—his own mother, Allen, objects of public charity! His face was clouded, his hands clenched. It was only a chance that he would be killed; there were four Hatburns though. His heart, he thought, would burst with misery; every instinct fought for the expression, the upholding of the family prestige, honor. A hatred for the Hatburns was like a strangling hand at his throat.

"I got to!" he said; but his voice was wavering; the dull conviction seized him that his mother was right.

All the mountains would think of him as a coward—that Kinemon who wouldn't stand up to the men who had destroyed Allen and his father!

A sob heaved in his chest; rebellious tears streamed over his thin cheeks. He was crying like a baby. He threw an arm up across his eyes and stumbled from the room.

V

However, he had no intention of clerking back of a counter, of getting down rolls of muslin, papers of buttons, for women, if it could be avoided. Priest's store was a long wooden structure with a painted façade and a high platform before it where the mountain wagons unloaded their various merchandise teamed from the railroad, fifty miles distant. The owner had a small glass-enclosed office on the left as you entered the store; and there David found him. He turned, gazing over his glasses, as the other entered.

"How's Allen?" he asked pleasantly. "I heard he was bad; but we certainly look to have him back driving stage."

"I came to see you about that," David replied. "Allen can't never drive again; but, Mr. Priest, sir, I can. Will you give me a try?"

The elder ignored the question in the concern he exhibited for Allen's injury.

"It is a cursed outrage!" he declared. "Those Hatburns will be got up, or my name's not Priest! We'd have them now, but the jail wouldn't keep them overnight, and court three months off."

David preserved a stony silence—the only attitude possible, he had decided, in the face of his patent dereliction.

"Will you try me on the Beaulings stage?" he repeated. "I've been round horses all my life; and I can hold a gun straighter than Allen."

Priest shook his head negatively.

"You are too light—too young," he explained; "you have to be above a certain age for the responsibility of the mail. There are some rough customers to handle. If you only had five years more now —— We are having a hard time finding a suitable man. A damned shame about Allen! Splendid man!"

"Can't you give it to me for a week," David persisted, "and see how I do?"

They would have awarded him the position immediately, he felt, if he had properly attended to the Hatburns. He wanted desperately to explain his failure to Priest, but a dogged pride prevented. The storekeeper was tapping on an open ledger with a pen, gazing doubtfully at David.

"You couldn't be worse than the drunken object we have now," he admitted. "You couldn't hold the job permanent yet, but I might let you drive extra—a day or so—till we find a man. I'd like to do what I could for Mrs. Kinemon. Your father was a good man, a good customer. . . . Come and see me again—say, day after to-morrow."

This half promise partly rehabilitated his fallen pride. There was no sign in the men he passed that they held him in contempt for neglecting to kill the Hatburns; and his mother wisely avoided the subject. She wondered a little at Priest's considering him, even temporarily, for the stage; but confined her wonder to a species of compliment. David sat beside Allen, while the latter, between silent spaces of suffering, advised him of the individual characters and attributes of the horses that might come under his guiding reins.

It seemed incredible that he should actually be seated in the driver's place on the stage, swinging the heavy whip out over a team trotting briskly into the early morning; but there he was. There were no passengers, and the stage rode roughly over a small bridge of loose boards beyond the village. He pulled the horses into a walk on the mountain beyond, and was soon skirting the Galt farm, with its broad fields, where he had lived as a mere boy.

David slipped his hand under the leather seat and felt the smooth handle of the revolver. Then, on an even reach, he wrapped the reins about the whipstock and publicly filled and lighted his clay pipe. The smoke drifted back in a fragrant cloud; the stage moved forward steadily and easily; folded in momentary forgetfulness,

lifted by a feeling of mature responsibility, he was almost happy. But he swung down the mountain beyond his familiar valley, crossed a smaller ridge, and turned into a stony sweep rising on the left.

It was Elbow Barren. In an instant a tide of bitterness, of passionate regret, swept over him. He saw the Hatburns' house, a rectangular bleak structure crowning a gray prominence, with the tender green of young pole beans on one hand and a disorderly barn on the other, and a blue plume of smoke rising from an unsteady stone chimney against an end of the dwelling. No one was visible.

Hot tears filled his eyes as the stage rolled along past the moldy ditch into which Allen had fallen. The mangy curs! His grip tightened on the reins and the team broke into a clattering trot, speedily leaving the Barren behind. But the day had been robbed of its sparkle, his position of its pleasurable pride. He saw again his father's body on the earthen floor of the stable, the bridle in his stiff fingers; Allen carried into the house. And he, David Kinemon, had had to step back, like a coward or a woman, and let the Hatburns triumph.

The stage drew up before the Beaulings post-office in the middle of the afternoon. David delivered the mail bags, and then led the team back to a stable on the grassy verge of the houses clustered at the end of tracks laid precariously over a green plain to a boxlike station. Beaulings had a short row of unpainted two-story structures, the single street cut into deep muddy scars; stores with small dusty windows; eating houses elevated on piles; an insignificant mission chapel with a tar-papered roof; and a number of obviously masked depots for the illicit sale of liquor.

A hotel, neatly painted white and green, stood detached from the main activity. There, washing his face in a tin basin on a back porch, David had his fried supper, sat for a while outside in the gathering dusk, gazing at the crude-oil flares, the passing dark figures beyond, the still obscured immensity of mountain and forest.

And then he went up to a pine sealed room, like the heated interior of a packing box, where he partly undressed for bed.

VI

The next mid-morning, descending the sharp grade toward Elbow Barren, there was no lessening of David's bitterness against the Hatburns. The flavor of tobacco died in his mouth, he grew unconscious of the lurching heavy stage, the responsibility of the mail, all committed to his care. A man was standing by the ditch on the reach of scrubby grass that fell to the road; and David pulled his team into the slowest walk possible. It was his first actual sight of a Hatburn. He saw a man middling tall, with narrow high shoulders, and a clay-yellow countenance, extraordinarily pinched through the temples, with minute restless black eyes. The latter were the only mobile feature of his slouching indolent pose, his sullen regard. He might have been a scarecrow, David thought, but for that glittering gaze.

The latter leaned forward, the stage barely moving, and looked unwaveringly at the Hatburn beyond. He wondered whether the man knew him—David Kinemon? But of course he did; all the small details of mountain living circulated with the utmost rapidity from clearing to clearing. He was now directly opposite the other; he could take out the revolver and kill that Hatburn, where he stood, with one precise shot. His hand instinctively reached under the seat. Then he remembered Allen, forever dependent on the couch; his mother, who had lately seemed so old. The stage was passing the motionless figure. David drew a deep painful breath, and swung out his whip with a vicious sweep.

His pride, however, returned when he drove into Crabapple, down the familiar street, past the familiar men and women turning to watch him, with a new automatic measure of attention in his elevated position. He walked back to his dwelling with a slight swagger of hips and shoulders, and, with something of a flourish, laid down the two dollars he had been paid for the trip to Beaulings.

"I'm to drive again to-morrow," he stated to his mother and Allen; "after that Priest has a regular man. I suppose, then, I'll have to go into the store."

The last seemed doubly difficult now, since he had driven stage. As he disposed of supper, eating half a pie with his cracklings and greens, his mother moved from the stove to the table, refilled his plate, waved the paper streamers of the fly brush above his head, exactly as she had for his father. Already, he assured himself, he had become a man.

The journey to Beaulings the following day was an unremarkable replica of the one before. He saw no Hatburns; the sun wheeled from east to west at apparently the same speed as the stage; and Beaulings held its inevitable surge of turbulent lumbermen, the oil flares made their lurid note on the vast unbroken starry canopy of night.

The morning of his return was heavy with a wet low vapor. The mail bags, as he strapped them to the rear rack, were slippery; the dawn was a slow monotonous widening of dull light. There were no passengers for Crabapple, and David, with his coat collar turned up about his throat, urged the horses to a faster gait through the watery cold.

The brake set up a shrill grinding, and then the stage passed Elbow Barren in a smart rattle and bumping. After that David slowed down to light his pipe. The horses willingly lingered, almost stopping; and, the memory of the slippery bags at the back of his head, David dismounted, walked to the rear of the stage.

A chilling dread swept through him as he saw, realized, that one of the Government sacks was missing. The straps were loose about the remaining two; in a minute or more they would have gone. Panic seized him, utter misery, at the thought of what Priest, Crabapple, would say. He would be disgraced, contemptuously dismissed—a failure in the trust laid on him.

He collected his faculties by a violent effort; the bags, he was sure, had been safe coming down the last mountain; he had walked part

of the way, and he was certain that he would have noticed anything wrong. The road was powerful bad through the Barren. . . .

He got up into the stage, backed the team abruptly on its haunches, and slowly retraced his way to the foot of the descent. There was no mail lying on the empty road. David turned again, his heart pounding against his ribs, tears of mortification, of apprehension, blurring his vision. The bag must have fallen here in Elbow Barren. Subconsciously he stopped the stage. On the right the dwelling of the Hatburns showed vaguely through the mist. No one else could have been on the road. A troubled expression settled on his glowing countenance, a pondering doubt; then his mouth drew into a determined line.

"I'll have to go right up and ask," he said aloud.

He jumped down to the road, led the horses to a convenient sapling, where he hitched them. Then he drew his belt tighter about his slender waist and took a step forward. A swift frown scarred his brow, and he turned and transferred the revolver to a pocket in his trousers.

The approach to the house was rough with stones and muddy clumps of grass. A track, he saw, circled the dwelling to the back; but he walked steadily and directly up to the shallow portico between windows with hanging, partly slatted shutters. The house had been painted dark brown a long while before; the paint had weathered and blistered into a depressing harmony with the broken and mossy shingles of the roof, the rust-eaten and sagging gutters festooning the ragged eaves.

David proceeded up the steps, hesitated, and then, his mouth firm and hands steady, knocked. He waited for an apparently interminable space, and then knocked again, more sharply. Now he heard voices within. He waited rigidly for steps to approach, the door to open; but in vain. They had heard, but chose to ignore his summons; and a swift cold anger mounted in him. He could follow the path round to the back; but, he told himself, he—David Kinemon—wouldn't walk to the Hatburns' kitchen door. They should meet him at the front. He beat again on the scarred wood,

waited; and then, in an irrepressible flare of temper, kicked the door open.

He was conscious of a slight gasping surprise at the dark moldy-smelling hall open before him. A narrow bare stairway mounted above, with a passage at one side, and on each hand entrances were shut on farther interiors. The scraping of a chair, and talking, came from the left; the door, he saw, was not latched. He pushed it open and entered. There was a movement in the room still beyond, and he walked evenly into what evidently was a kitchen.

The first thing he saw was the mail bag, lying intact on a table. Then he was meeting the concerted stare of four men. One of two, so similar that he could not have distinguished between them, he had seen before, at the edge of the road. Another was very much older, taller, more sallow. The fourth was strangely fat, with a great red hanging mouth. The latter laughed uproariously, a jangling, mirthless sound followed by a mumble of words without connective sense. David moved toward the mail bag:

"I'm driving stage and lost those letters. I'll take them right along."

The oldest Hatburn, with a pail in his hand, was standing by an opening, obviously at the point of departure on a small errand. He looked toward the two similar men, nearer David.

"Boy," he demanded, "did you kick in my front door?"

"I'm the Government's agent," David replied. "I've got to have the mail. I'm David Kinemon too; and I wouldn't step round to your back door, Hatburn—not if there was a boiling of you!"

"You'll learn you this," one of the others broke in: "it will be the sweetest breath you ever draw'd when you get out that back door!"

The elder moved on to the pounded earth beyond. Here, in their presence, David felt the loathing for the Hatburns a snake inspires—dusty brown rattlers and silent cottonmouths. His hatred obliterated every other feeling but a dim consciousness of the necessity to recover the mail bag. He was filled with an overpowering

longing to revenge Allen; to mark them with the payment of his father, dead in the stable shed.

His objective senses were abnormally clear, cold: he saw every detail of the Hatburns' garb—the soiled shirts with buttoned pockets on their left breasts; the stained baggy breeches in heavy boots—such boots as had stamped Allen into nothingness; dull yellow faces and beady eyes; the long black hair about their dark ears.

The idiot thrust his fingers into his loose mouth, his shirt open on a hairy pendulous chest. The Hatburn who had not yet spoken showed a row of tobacco-brown broken teeth.

"He mightn't get a heave on that breath," he asserted.

The latter lounged over against a set of open shelves where, David saw, lay a heavy rusted revolver. Hatburn picked up the weapon and turned it slowly in his thin grasp.

"I'm carrying the mail," David repeated, his hand on the bag. "You've got no call on this or on me."

He added the last with tremendous effort. It seemed unspeakable that he should be there, the Hatburns before him, and merely depart.

"What do you think of putting the stage under a soft little strawberry like that?" the other inquired.

For answer there was a stunning report, a stinging odor of saltpeter; and David felt a sharp burning on his shoulder, followed by a slow warmish wet, spreading.

"I didn't go to do just that there!" the Hatburn who had fired explained. "I wanted to clip his ear, but he twitched like."

David picked up the mail bag and took a step backward in the direction he had come. The other moved between him and the door.

"If you get out," he said, "it'll be through the hogwash."

David placed the bag on the floor, stirred by a sudden realization—he had charge of the stage, official responsibility for the mail. He was no longer a private individual; what his mother had commanded, entreated, had no force here and now. The Hatburns were unlawfully detaining him.

As this swept over him, a smile lighted his fresh young cheeks, his frank mouth, his eyes like innocent flowers. Hatburn shot again; this time the bullet flicked at David's old felt hat. With his smile lingering he smoothly leveled the revolver from his pocket and shot the mocking figure in the exact center of the pocket patched on his left breast.

David wheeled instantly, before the other Hatburn running for him, and stopped him with a bullet as remorselessly placed as the first. The two men on the floor stiffened grotesquely and the idiot crouched in a corner, whimpering.

David passed his hand across his brow; then he bent and grasped the mail bag. He was still pausing when the remaining Hatburn strode into the kitchen. The latter whispered a sharp oath. David shifted the bag; but the elder had him before he could bring the revolver up. A battering blow fell, knocked the pistol clattering over the floor, and David instinctively clutched the other's wrist.

The blows multiplied, beating David into a daze, through which a single realization persisted—he must not lose his grip upon the arm that was swinging him about the room, knocking over chairs, crashing against the table, even drawing him across the hot iron of the stove. He must hold on!

He saw the face above him dimly through the deepening mist; it seemed demoniacal, inhuman, reaching up to the ceiling—a yellow giant bent on his destruction. . . .

His mother, years ago, lives away, had read to them—to his father and Allen and himself—about a giant, a giant and David; and in the end ——

He lost all sense of the entity of the man striving to break him against the wooden angles of the room; he had been caught, was twisting, in a great storm; a storm with thunder and cruel flashes of lightning; a storm hammering and hammering at him. . . . Must not lose his hold on—on life! He must stay fast against everything! It wasn't his hand gripping the destructive force towering above him, but a strange quality within him, at once within him and aside, burning in his heart and directing him from without.

The storm subsided; out of it emerged the livid face of Hatburn; and then, quite easily, he pitched David back across the floor. He lay there a moment and then stirred, partly rose, beside the mail bag. His pistol was lying before him; he picked it up.

The other was deliberately moving the dull barrel of a revolver up over his body. A sharp sense of victory possessed David, and he whispered his brother's name. Hatburn fired—uselessly. The other's battered lips smiled. Goliath, that was the giant's name. He shot easily, securely—once.

Outside, the mail bag seemed weighted with lead. He swayed and staggered over the rough declivity to the road. It required a superhuman effort to heave the pack into the stage. The strap with which he had hitched the horses had turned into iron. At last it was untied. He clambered up to the enormous height of the driver's seat, unwrapped the reins from the whipstock, and the team started forward.

He swung to the lurching of the stage like an inverted pendulum; darkness continually thickened before his vision; waves of sickness swept up to his head. He must keep the horses on the road, forward the Government mail!

A grim struggle began between his beaten flesh, a terrible weariness, and that spirit which seemed to be at once a part of him and a voice. He wiped the blood from his young brow; from his eyes miraculously blue like an ineffable May sky.

"Just a tol'able David," he muttered weakly—"only just tol'able!"

THE KITCHEN GODS

By

GULIELMA F. ALSOP

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In Old Romance there were Lily Maids, like Tennyson's Elaine of Astolat. They are out of fashion in the West. But China is a land that time forgot, and in such a land, there may still be Lily Maids.

THE KITCHEN GODS was the only story published in 1919 to be included in both the O. Henry Memorial Prize collection and the O'Brien volume of Best Stories.

GULIELMA FELL ALSOP was born in Alleghany, Pennsylvania. She is a graduate of Barnard College and of the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania, with graduate work in Vienna, Berlin, and New York.

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Before her work in China, Dr. Alsop traveled extensively in Japan, Hawaii, and Algeria. In 1917 she took up the practice of medicine in New York City. Besides attending to her general medical duties, she holds the post of College Physician at Barnard.

From the wealth of her first-hand knowledge of China, Dr. Alsop has written a series of stories dealing with the problems of the interaction of Old China and new western ideas. These she will soon publish under the title *Vermilion Bells.*

THE KITCHEN GODS

By Gulielma F. Alsop

THE lilies bloomed that day. Out in the courtyard, in their fantastic green-dragoned pots, one by one the tiny, ethereal petals opened. Dong-Yung went rapturously among them, stooping low to inhale their faint fragrance. The square courtyard, guarded on three sides by the wings of the house, facing the windowless blank wall on the fourth, was mottled with sunlight. Just this side of the wall a black shadow, as straight and opaque as the wall itself, banded the court with darkness; but on the hither side, where the lilies bloomed and Dong-Yung moved among them, lay glittering, yellow sunlight. The little box of a house where the gate-keeper lived made a bulge in the uniform blackness of the wall and its shadow. The two tall poles, with the upturned baskets, the devil-catchers, rose like flagstaffs from both sides of the door. A huge china griffon stood at the right of the gate. From beyond the wall came the sounds of early morning—the click of wooden sandals on cobbled streets and the panting cries of the coolies bringing in fresh vegetables or carrying back to the denuded land the refuse of the city. The gate-keeper was awake, brushing out his house with a broom of twigs. He was quite bald, and the top of his head was as tanned and brown as the legs of small summer children.

"Good morning, Honorable One," he called. "It is a good omen. The lilies have opened."

An amah * blue-trousered, blue-jacketed, blue-aproned, cluttered across the courtyard with two pails of steaming water.

"Good morning, Honorable One. The water for the great wife is hot and heavy." She dropped her buckets, the water splashing over

* An amah is a maid-servant.

in runnels and puddles at her feet, and stooped to smell the lilies. "It is an auspicious day."

From the casement-window in the right balcony a voice called:

"Thou dunce! Here I have been waiting already half the day. Quicker! quicker!"

It sounded elderly and querulous, a voice accustomed to be obeyed and to dominate. The great wife's face appeared a moment at the casement. Her eyes swept over the courtyard scene—over the blooming lilies, and Dong-Yung standing among them.

"Behold the small wife, cursed of the gods!" she cried in her high, shrill voice. "Not even a girl can she bear her master. May she eat bitterness all her days!"

The amah shouldered the steaming buckets and splashed across the bare boards of the ancestral hall beyond.

"The great wife is angry," murmured the gate-keeper. "Oh, Honorable One, shall I admit the flower-girl? She has fresh orchids."

Dong-Yung nodded. The flower-girl came slowly in under the guarded gateway. She was a country child, with brown cheeks and merry eyes. Her shallow basket was steadied by a ribbon over one shoulder, and caught between an arm and a swaying hip. In the flat, round basket, on green little leaves, lay the wired perfumed orchids.

"How many? It is an auspicious day. See, the lilies have bloomed. One for the hair and two for the buttonholes. They smell sweet as the breath of heaven itself."

Dong-Yung smiled as the flower-girl stuck one of the fragrant, fragile, green-striped orchids in her hair, and hung two others, caught on delicate loops of wire, on the jade studs of her jacket, buttoned on the right shoulder.

"Ah, you are beautiful-come-death!" said the flower-girl. "Great happiness be thine!"

"Even a small wife can be happy at times." Dong-Yung took out a little woven purse, and paid over two coppers apiece to the flower-girl.

At the gate the girl and the gate-keeper fell a-talking.

"Is the morning rice ready?" called a man's voice from the room behind.

Dong-Yung turned quickly. Her whole face changed. It had been smiling and pleased before at the sight of the faint, white lily-petals and the sunlight on her feet and the fragrance of the orchids in her hair; but now it was lit with an inner radiance.

"My beloved Master!" Dong-Yung made a little instinctive gesture toward the approaching man, which in a second was caught and curbed by Chinese etiquette. Dressed, as she was, in pale-gray satin trousers, loose, and banded at the knee with wide blue stripes, and with a soft jacket to match, she was as beautiful in the eyes of the approaching man as the newly opened lilies. What he was in her eyes it would be hard for any modern woman to grasp: that rapture of adoration, that bliss of worship, has lingered only in rare hearts and rarer spots on the earth's surface.

Foh-Kyung came out slowly through the ancestral hall. The sunlight edged it like a bright border. The doors were wide open, and Dong-Yung saw the decorous rows of square chairs and square tables set rhythmically along the walls, and the covered dais at the head for the guest of honor. Long crimson scrolls, sprawled with gold ideographs, hung from ceiling to floor. A rosewood cabinet, filled with vases, peach bloom, imperial yellow, and turquoise blue, gleamed like a lighted lamp in the shadowy morning light of the room.

Foh-Kyung stooped to smell the lilies.

"They perfume the very air we breathe. Little Jewel, I love our old Chinese ways. I love the custom of the lily-planting, and the day the lilies bloom. I love to think the gods smell them in heaven, and are gracious to mortals for their fragrance's sake."

"I am so happy!" Dong-Yung said, poking the toe of her slipper in and out the sunlight. She looked up at the man before her, and saw he was tall and slim and as subtle-featured as the cross-legged bronze Buddha himself. His long, thin hands were hid, crossed and slipped along the wrists within the loose apricot satin sleeves of

his brocaded garment. His feet, in their black satin slippers and tight-fitting white muslin socks, were austere and aristocratic. Dong-Yung, when he was absent, loved best to think of him thus, with his hands hidden and his eyes smiling.

"The willow-leaves will bud soon," answered Dong-Yung, glancing over her shoulder at the tapering, yellowing twigs of the ancient tree.

"And the beech-blossoms," continued Foh-Kyung. "'The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof.'"

"The foreign devil's wisdom," answered Dong-Yung.

"It is greater than ours, Dong-Yung; greater and lovelier. To-day, to-day, I will go to their hall of ceremonial worship and say to their holy priest that I think and believe the Jesus way."

"Oh, most-beloved Master, is it also permitted to women, to a small wife, to believe the Jesus way?"

"I will believe for thee, too, little Lotus Flower in the Pond."

"Tell me, O Teacher of Knowledge—tell me that in my heart and in my mind I may follow a little way whither thou goest in thy heart and in thy mind!"

Foh-Kyung moved out of the shadow of the ancestral hall and stood in the warm sunlight beside Dong-Yung, his small wife. His hands were still withheld and hidden, clasping his wrists within the wide, loose apricot sleeves of his gown, but his eyes looked as if they touched her. Dong-Yung hid her happiness, even as the flowers hide theirs within silent, incurving petals.

"The water is cold as the chill of death. Go, bring me hot water—water hot enough to scald an egg."

Foh-Kyung and Dong-Yung turned to the casement in the upper right-hand wing and listened apprehensively. The quick chatter of angry voices rushed out into the sunlight.

"The honorable great wife is very cross this morning." Dong-Yung shivered and turned back to the lilies. "To-day perhaps she will beat me again. Would that at least I had borne my lord a young prince for a son; then perhaps——"

"Go not near her, little Jewel. Stay in thine own rooms. Nay,

I have sons a-plenty. Do not regret the childlessness. I would not have your body go down one foot into the grave for a child. I love thee for thyself."

"Now my lord speaks truly, as do the foreign devils to the shameless, open-faced women. I like the ways of the outside kingdom well. Tell me more of them, my Master."

Foh-Kyung moved his hands as if he would have withdrawn them from his apricot-colored sleeves. Dong-Yung saw the withheld motion, and swayed nearer. For a moment Dong-Yung saw the look in his eyes that engulfed her in happiness; then it was gone, and he looked away past her, across the opening lily-buds and the black rampart of the wall, at something distant, yet precious. Foh-Kyung moved closer. His face changed. His eyes held that hidden rapture that only Dong-Yung and the foreign-born priest had seen.

"Little Jewel, wilt thou go with me to the priest of the foreign-born faith? Come!" He withdrew his hand from his sleeve and touched Dong-Yung on the shoulder. "Come, we will go hand in hand, thou and I, even as the men and women of the Jesus thinking; not as Chinese, I before, and thou six paces behind. Their God loves men and women alike."

"Is it permitted to a small wife to worship the foreign-born God?" Dong-Yung lifted her eyes to the face of Foh-Kyung. "Teach me, O my Lord Master! My understanding is but young and fearful——"

Foh-Kyung moved into the sunlight beside her.

"Their God loves all the world. Their God is different, little Flower, from the painted images: full of blessings, not curses. He loves even little girl babies that mothers would throw away. Truly his heart is still more loving than the heart of a mother."

"And yet I am fearful——" Dong-Yung looked back into the shadows of the guest-hall, where the ancestral tablets glowed upon the wall, and crimson tapers stood ready before them. "Our gods I have touched and handled."

"Nay, in the Jesus way there is no fear left." Foh-Kyung's voice dropped lower. Its sound filled Dong-Yung with longing. "When

the wind screams in the chimneys at night, it is but the wind, not evil spirits. When the summer breeze blows in at the open door, we need not bar it. It is but the summer breeze from the rice-fields, uninhabited by witch-ghosts. When we eat our morning rice, we are compelled to make no offering to the kitchen gods in the stove corner. They cannot curse our food. Ah, in the Jesus way there is no more fear!"

Dong-Yung drew away from her lord and master and looked at him anxiously. He was not seeing her at all. His eyes looked beyond, across the fragile lily-petals, through the solid black wall, at a vision he saw in the world. Dong-Yung bent her head to sniff the familiar sweet springtime orchid hanging from the jade stud on her shoulder.

"Your words are words of good hearing, O beloved Teacher. Nevertheless, let me follow six paces behind. I am not worthy to touch your hand. Six paces behind, when the sun shines in your face, my feet walk in the shadow of your garments."

Foh-Kyung gathered his gaze back from his visions and looked at his small wife, standing in a pool of sunshine before him. Overhead the lazy crows flew by, winging out from their city roosts to the rice-fields for the day's food.

"Tea-boiled eggs!" cried a vender from beyond the wall. A man stopped at the gate, put down his shoulder-tray of food, and bargained with the ancient, mahogany-scalped gate-keeper. Faint odors of food frying in oil stole out from the depths of the house behind him. And Dong-Yung, very quiet and passive in the pose of her body, gazed up at Foh-Kyung with those strange, secretive, ardent eyes. All around him was China, its very essence and sound and smell. Dong-Yung was a part of it all; nay, she was even the very heart of it, swaying there in the yellow light among the lily-petals.

"Precious Jewel! Yet it is sweeter to walk side by side, our feet stepping out into the sunlight together, and our shadows mingling behind. I want you beside me."

The last words rang with sudden warmth. Dong-Yung trembled

and crimsoned. It was not seemly that a man speak to a woman thus, even though that man was a husband and the woman his wife, not even though the words were said in an open court, where the great wife might spy and listen. And yet Dong-Yung thrilled to those words.

An amah called, "The morning rice is ready."

Dong-Yung hurried into the open room, where the light was still faint, filtering in through a high-silled window and the door. A round, brown table stood in the center of the room. In the corner of the room behind stood the crescentic, white plaster stove, with its dull wooden kettle-lids and its crackling straw. Two cooks, country women, sat in the hidden corner behind the stove, and poked in the great bales of straw and gossiped. Their voices and the answers of the serving amah filled the kitchen with noise. In their decorous niche at the upper right hand of the stove sat the two kitchen gods, small ancient idols, with hidden hands and crossed feet, gazing out upon a continually hungry world. Since time was they had sat there, ensconced at the very root of life, seemingly placid and unseeing and unhearing, yet venomously watching to be placated with food. Opposite the stove, on the white wall, hung a row of brass hooks, from which dangled porcelain spoons with pierced handles. On a serving-table stood the piled bowls for the day, blue-and-white rice-patterns, of a thin, translucent ware, showing the delicate light through the rice seeds; red-and-green dragoned bowls for the puddings; and tiny saucer-like platters for the vegetables. The tea-cups, saucered and lidded, but without handles, stood in a row before the polished brass hot-water kettle.

The whole room was full of a stirring, wakening life, of the crackling straw fire, of the steaming rice, all white and separate-kerneled in its great, shallow, black iron kettles, lidded with those heavy hand-made wooden lids, while the boiling tea water hissed, and spat out a snake of white steam.

With that curious democracy of China, where high and low alike are friendly, Dong-Yung hurried into her beloved kitchen.

"Has the master come?" asked the serving maid.

"Coming, coming," Dong-Yung answered. "I myself will take in his morning rice, after I have offered the morning oblations to the gods."

Dong-Yung selected two of the daintiest blue-and-white rice-pattern bowls. The cook lifted off the wooden lid of the rice-kettle, and Dong-Yung scooped up a dipperful of the snow-white kernels. On the tiny shelf before each god, the father and mother god of the household, Dong-Yung placed her offering. She stood off a moment, surveying them in pleased satisfaction—the round, blue bowls, with the faint tracery of light; the complacent gods above, red and green and crimson, so age-long, comfortably ensconced in their warm stove corner. She made swift obeisance with her hands and body before those ancient idols. A slant of sunshine swept in from the high windows and fell over her in a shaft of light. The thoughts of her heart were all warm and mixed and confused. She was happy. She loved her kitchen, her gods, all the familiar ways of Chinese life. She loved her silken, satin clothes, perfumed and embroidered and orchid-crowned, yet most of all she loved her lord and master. Perhaps it was this love for him that made all the rest of life so precious, that made each bowl of white rice an oblation, each daily act a glorification. So she flung out her arms and bent her head before the kitchen gods, the symbol of her ancient happiness.

"Dong-Yung, I do not wish you to do this any more."

Dong-Yung turned, her obeisance half arrested in mid-air. Foh-Kyung stood in the doorway.

"My lord," stammered Dong-Yung, "I did not understand your meaning."

"I know that, little Flower in my House. The new meaning is hard to understand. I, too, am but a blind child unused to the touch of the road. But the kitchen gods matter no more; we pray to a spirit."

Foh-Kyung, in his long apricot-colored garment, crossed the threshold of the kitchen, crossed the shadow and sunlight that striped the bare board floor, and stood before the kitchen gods. His

eyes were on a level with their strange, jeweled eyes that stared forth inscrutably into the eating centuries. Dong-Yung stood half bowed, breathless with a quick, cold fear. The cook, one hand holding a shiny brown dipper, the other a porcelain dish, stood motionless at the wooden table under the window. From behind the stove peeped the frightened face of one of the fire-tenders. The whole room was turned to stone, motionless, expectant, awaiting the releasing moment of arousement—all, that is, but the creeping sunshine, sliding nearer and nearer the crossed feet of the kitchen gods; and the hissing steam fire, warming, coddling the hearts of the gods. Sun at their feet, fire at their hearts, food before them, and mortals turned to stone!

Foh-Kyung laughed softly, standing there, eye-level with the kitchen gods. He stretched out his two hands, and caught a god in each. A shudder ran through the motionless room.

"It is wickedness!" The porcelain dish fell from the hand of the cook, and a thousand rice-kernels, like scattered pearls, ran over the floor.

"A blasphemer," the fire-tender whispered, peering around the stove with terrified eyes. "This household will bite off great bitterness."

Foh-Kyung walked around the corner of the stove. The fire sparked and hissed. The sunshine filled the empty niche. Not since the building of the house and the planting of the tall black cypress-trees around it, a hundred years before, had the sunlight touched the wall behind the kitchen gods.

Dong-Yung sprang into life. She caught Foh-Kyung's sleeve.

"O my Lord and Master, I pray you, do not utterly cast them away into the burning, fiery furnace! I fear some evil will befall us."

Foh-Kyung, a green-and-gold god in each hand, stopped and turned. His eyes smiled at Dong-Yung. She was so little and so precious and so afraid! Dong-Yung saw the look of relenting. She held his sleeve the tighter.

"Light of my Eyes, do good deeds to me. My faith is but a little

faith. How could it be great unto thy great faith? Be gentle with my kitchen gods. Do not utterly destroy them. I will hide them."

Foh-Kyung smiled yet more, and gave the plaster gods into her hands as one would give a toy to a child.

"They are thine. Do with them as thou wilt, but no more set them up in this stove corner and offer them morning rice. They are but painted, plastered gods. I worship the spirit above."

Foh-Kyung sat down at the men's table in the men's room beyond. An amah brought him rice and tea. Other man of the household there was none, and he ate his meal alone. From the women's room across the court came a shrill round of voices. The voice of the great wife was loudest and shrillest. The voices of the children, his sons and daughters, rose and fell with clear childish insistence among the older voices. The amah's voice laughed with an equal gaiety.

Dong-Yung hid away the plastered green-and-gold gods. Her heart was filled with a delicious fear. Her lord was even master of the gods. He picked them up in his two hands, he carried them about as carelessly as a man carries a boy child astride his shoulder; he would even have cast them into the fire! Truly, she shivered with delight. Nevertheless, she was glad she had hidden them safely away. In the corner of the kitchen stood a box of white pigskin with beaten brass clasps made like the outspread wings of a butterfly. Underneath the piles of satin she had hidden them, and the key to the butterfly clasps was safe in her belt-jacket.

Dong-Yung stood in the kitchen door and watched Foh-Kyung.

"Does my lord wish for anything?"

Foh-Kyung turned, and saw her standing there in the doorway. Behind her were the white stove and the sun-filled, empty niche. The light flooded through the doorway. Foh-Kyung set down his rice-bowl from his left hand and his ivory chop-sticks from his right. He stood before her.

"Truly, Dong-Yung, I want thee. Do not go away and leave me. Do not cross to the eating-room of the women and children. Eat with me."

"It has not been heard of in the Middle Kingdom for a woman to eat with a man."

"Nevertheless, it shall be. Come!"

Dong-Yung entered slowly. The light in this dim room was all gathered upon the person of Foh-Kyung, in the gleaming patterned roses of his gown, in his deep amethyst ring, in his eyes. Dong-Yung came because of his eyes. She crossed the room slowly, swaying with that peculiar grace of small-footed women, till she stood at the table beside Foh-Kyung. She was now even more afraid than when he would have cast the kitchen gods into the fire. They were but gods, kitchen gods, that he was about to break; this was the primeval bondage of the land, ancient custom.

"Give me thy hand and look up with thine eyes and thy heart."

Dong-Yung touched his hand. Foh-Kyung looked up as if he saw into the ether beyond, and there saw a spirit vision of ineffable radiance. But Dong-Yung watched him. She saw him transfigured with an inner light. His eyes moved in prayer. The exaltation spread out from him to her, it tingled through their finger-tips, it covered her from head to foot.

Foh-Kyung dropped her hand and moved. Dong-Yung leaned nearer.

"I, too, would believe the Jesus way."

In the peculiar quiet of mid-afternoon, when the shadows begin to creep down from the eaves of the pagodas and zigzag across the rice-fields to bed, Foh-Kyung and Dong-Yung arrived at the compound of the foreigners. The lazy native streets were still dull with the end of labor. At the gate of the compound the rickshaw coolies tipped down the bamboo shafts, to the ground. Dong-Yung stepped out quickly, and looked at her lord and master. He smiled.

"Nay, I do not fear," Dong-Yung answered, with her eyes on his face. "Yet this place is strange, and lays a coldness around my heart."

"Regard not their awkward ways," said Foh-Kyung as he turned in at the gate; "in their hearts they have the secret of life."

The gate-keeper bowed, and slipped the coin, warm from Foh-Kyung's hand, into his ready pocket.

"Walk beside me, little Wife of my Heart." Foh-Kyung stopped in the wide graveled road and waited for Dong-Yung. Standing there in the sunlight, more vivid yet than the light itself, in his imperial yellow robes, he was the end of life, nay, life itself, to Dong-Yung. "We go to the house of the foreign priest to seek until we find the foreign God. Let us go side by side."

Dong-Yung, stepping with slow, small-footed grace, walked beside him.

"My understanding is as the understanding of a little child, beloved Teacher; but my heart lies like a shell in thy hand, its words but as the echo of thine. My honor is great that thou do not forget me in the magnitude of the search."

Dong-Yung's pleated satin skirts swayed to and fro against the imperial yellow of Foh-Kyung's robe. Her face, colored like a pale spring blossom, looked strangely ethereal above her brocade jacket. Her heart still beat thickly, half with fear and half with the secret rapture of their quest and her lord's desire for her.

Foh-Kyung took a silken and ivory fan from an inner pocket and spread it in the air. Dong-Yung knew the fan well. It came from a famous jeweler's on Nanking Road, and had been designed by an old court poet of long ago. The tiny ivory spokes were fretted like ivy-twigs in the North, but on the leaves of silk was painted a love-story of the South. There was a tea-house, with a maiden playing a lute, and the words of the song, fantastic black ideographs, floated off to the ears of her lover. Foh-Kyung spread out its leaves in the sun, and looked at it and smiled.

"Never is the heart of man satisfied," he said, "alone. Neither when the willow fuzz flies in the spring, or when the midnight snow silvers the palms. Least of all is it satisfied when it seeks the presence of God above. I want thee beside me."

Dong-Yung hid her delight. Already for the third time he said

those words—those words that changed all the world from one of a loving following-after to a marvelous oneness.

So they stepped across the lawn together. It was to Dong-Yung as if she stepped into an unknown land. She walked on flat green grass. Flowers in stiff and ordered rows went sedately round and round beneath a lurid red brick wall. A strange, square-cornered, flat-topped house squatted in the midst of the flat green grass. On the lawn at one side was a white-covered table, with a man and a woman sitting beside it. The four corners of the table-cloth dripped downward to the flat green grass. It was all very strange and ugly. Perhaps it was a garden, but no one would have guessed it. Dong-Yung longed to put each flower plant in a dragon bowl by itself and place it where the sun caught its petals one by one as the hours flew by. She longed for a narrow, tile-edged patch to guide her feet through all that flat green expanse. A little shiver ran over her. She looked back, down the wide graveled way, through the gate, where the gate-keeper sat, tipped back against the wall on his stool, to the shop of the money-changer's opposite. A boy leaned half across the polished wood counter and shook his fist in the face of the money-changer. "Thou thief!" he cried. "Give me my two cash!" Dong-Yung was reassured. Around her lay all the dear familiar things; at her side walked her lord and master. And he had said they were seeking a new freedom, a God of love. Her thoughts stirred at her heart and caught her breath away.

The foreigners rose to greet them. Dong-Yung touched the hand of an alien man. She did not like it at all. The foreign-born woman made her sit down beside her, and offered her bitter, strong tea in delicate, lidless cups, with handles bent like a twisted flower-branch.

"I have been meaning to call for a long time, Mrs. Li," said the foreign-born woman.

"The great wife will receive thee with much honor," Dong-Yung answered.

"I am so glad you came with your husband."

"Yes," Dong-Yung answered, with a little smile. "The customs of the foreign born are pleasant to our eyes."

"I am glad you like them," said the foreign-born woman. "I couldn't bear not to go everywhere with my husband."

Dong-Yung liked her suddenly on account of the look that sprang up a moment in her eyes and vanished again. She looked across at the priest, her husband, a man in black, with thin lips and seeing eyes. The eyes of the foreign woman, looking at the priest, her husband, showed how much she loved him. "She loves him even as a small wife loves," Dong-Yung thought to herself. Dong-Yung watched the two men, the one in imperial yellow, the one in black, sitting beside each other and talking. Dong-Yung knew they were talking of the search. The foreign-born woman was speaking to her again.

"The doctor told me I would die if I came to China; but John felt he had a call. I would not stand in his way."

The woman's face was illumined.

"And now you are very happy?" Dong-Yung announced.

"And now I am very happy; just as you will be very happy."

"I am always happy since my lord took me for his small wife." Dong-Yung matched her happiness with the happiness of the foreign-born woman, proudly, with assurance. In her heart she knew no woman, born to eat bitterness, had ever been so happy as she in all the worlds beneath the heavens. She looked around her, beyond the failure of the foreign woman's garden, at the piled, peaked roofs of China looking over the wall. The fragrance of a blossoming plum-tree stole across from a Chinese courtyard, and a peach-branch waved pink in the air. A wonder of contentment filled Dong-Yung.

All the while Foh-Kyung was talking. Dong-Yung turned back from all the greenness around her to listen. He sat very still, with his hands hid in his sleeves. The wave-ridged hem of his robe—blue and green and purple and red and yellow—was spread out decorously above his feet. Dong-Yung looked and looked at him, so still and motionless and so gorgeously arrayed. She looked from

his feet, long, slim, in black satin slippers and close-fitting white muslin socks, to the feet of the foreign priest. His feet were huge, ugly black things. From his feet Dong-Yung's eyes crept up to his face, over his priestly black clothes, rimmed with stiff white at wrist and throat. Yes, his face was even as the face of a priest, of one who serves between the gods and men, a face of seeing eyes and a rigid mouth. Dong-Yung shuddered.

"And so we have come, even as the foreign-born God tells us, a man and his wife, to believe the Jesus way."

Foh-Kyung spoke in a low voice, but his face smiled. Dong-Yung smiled, too, at his open, triumphant declarations. She said over his words to herself, under her breath, so that she would remember them surely when she wanted to call them back to whisper to her heart in the dark of some night. "We two, a man and his wife"—only dimly, with the heart of a little child, did Dong-Yung understand and follow Foh-Kyung; but the throb of her heart answered the hidden light in his eyes.

The foreign-born priest stood up. The same light shone in his eyes. It was a rapture, an exaltation. Suddenly an unheard-of-thing happened. The outside-kingdom woman put her arms around Dong-Yung! Dong-Yung was terrified. She was held tight against the other woman's shoulder. The foreign-born woman used a strange perfume. Dong-Yung only half heard her whispered words.

"We are like that, too. We could not be separated. Oh, you will be happy!"

Dong-Yung thought of the other woman. "In her heart she is humble and seemly. It is only her speech and her ways that are unfitting."

"We are going into the chapel a moment," said the priest. "Will you come, too?"

Dong-Yung looked at Foh-Kyung, a swift upward glance, like the sudden sweep of wings. She read his answer in his eyes. He wanted her to come. Not even in the temple of the foreign-born God did he wish to be without her.

A coolie called the foreign-born woman away.

The priest, in his tight trousers, and jacket, black and covered with a multitude of round flat buttons, stood up, and led the way into the house and down a long corridor to a closed door at the end. Dong-Yung hurried behind the two men. At the door the priest stood aside and held it open for her to pass in first. She hesitated. Foh-Kyung nodded.

"Do not think fearful things, little Princess," he whispered. "Enter, and be not afraid. There is no fear in the worship of Jesus."

So Dong-Yung crossed the threshold first. Something caught her breath away, just as the chanting of the dragon priests always did. She took a few steps forward and stood behind a low-backed bench. Before her, the light streamed into the little chapel through one luminous window of colored glass above the altar. It lay all over the gray-tiled floor in roses and sunflowers of pink and gold. A deep purple stripe fell across the head of the black-robed priest. Dong-Yung was glad of that. It made his robe less hideous, and she could not understand how one could serve a god unless in beautiful robes. On the altar beneath the window of colored flowers were two tall silver candlesticks, with smooth white tapers. A wide-mouthed vase filled with Chinese lilies stood between them. The whole chapel was faintly fragrant with their incense. So even the foreign-born worshipers lit candles, and offered the scent of the lilies to their spirit God. Truly, all the gods of all the earth and in the sky are lovers of lit candles and flowers. Also, one prays to all gods.

The place was very quiet and peaceful, mottled with the gorgeous, flower-like splashes of color. The waiting candles, the echoes of many prayers, the blossoms of worship, filled the tiny chapel. Dong-Yung liked it, despite herself, despite the strangeness of the image-less altar, despite the clothes of the priest. She stood quite still behind the bench flooded and filled with an all-pervading sense of happiness.

Foh-Kyung and the black-robed priest walked past her, down the little aisle, to a shiny brass railing that went like a fence round be-

fore the altar. The foreign-born priest laid one hand on the railing as if to kneel down, but Foh-Kyung turned and beckoned with his chin to Dong-Yung to come. She obeyed at once. She was surprisingly unafraid. Her feet walked through the patterns of color, which slid over her head and hands, gold from the gold of a cross and purple from the robe of a king. As if stepping through a rainbow, she came slowly down the aisle to the waiting men, and in her heart and in her eyes lay the light of all love and trust.

Foh-Kyung caught her hand.

"See, I take her hand," he said to the priest, "even as you would take the hand of your wife, proud and unashamed in the presence of your God. Even as your love is, so shall ours be. Where the thoughts of my heart lead, the heart of my small wife follows. Give us your blessing."

Foh-Kyung drew Dong-Yung to her knees beside him. His face was hidden, after the manner of the foreign worshipers; but hers was uplifted, her eyes gazing at the glass with the colors of many flowers and the shapes of men and angels. She was happier than she had ever been—happier even than when she had first worshiped the ancestral tablets with her lord and master, happier even than at the feast of the dead, when they laid their food offerings on the shaven grave-mounds. She felt closer to Foh-Kyung than in all her life before.

She waited. The silence grew and grew till in the heart of it something ominous took the place of its all-pervading peace. Foh-Kyung lifted his face from his hands and rose to his feet. Dong-Yung turned, still kneeling, to scan his eyes. The black-robed priest stood off and looked at them with horror. Surely it was horror! Never had Dong-Yung really liked him. Slowly she rose, and stood beside and a little behind Foh-Kyung. He had not blessed them. Faintly, from beyond the walls of the Christian chapel came the beating of drums. Devil-drums they were. Dong-Yung half smiled at the long-known familiar sound.

"Your small wife?" said the priest. "Have you another wife?"

"Assuredly," Foh-Kyung answered. "All men have a great wife

first; but this, my small wife, is the wife of my heart. Together we have come to seek and find the Jesus way."

The priest wiped his hand across his face. Dong-Yung saw that it was wet with tiny round balls of sweat. His mouth had suddenly become one thin red line, but in his eyes lay pain.

"Impossible," he said. His voice was quite different now, and sounded like bits of metal falling on stone. "No man can enter the church while living in sin with a woman other than his lawful wife. If your desire is real, put her away."

With instant response, Foh-Kyung made a stately bow.

"Alas! I have made a grievous mistake. The responsibility will be on my body. I thought all were welcome. We go. Later on, perhaps, we may meet again."

The priest spoke hurriedly.

"I do not understand your meaning. Is this belief of such light weight that you will toss it away for a sinful woman? Put her away, and come and believe."

But Foh-Kyung did not hear his words. As he turned away, Dong-Yung followed close behind her lord and master, only half comprehending, yet filled with a great fear. They went out again into the sunshine, out across the flat green grass, under the iron gateway, back into the Land of the Flowery Kingdom. Foh-Kyung did not speak until he put Dong-Yung in the rickshaw.

"Little Wife of my Heart," he said, "stop at the jeweler's and buy thee new ear-rings, these ear-rings of the sky-blue stone and sea-tears, and have thy hair dressed and thy gowns perfumed, and place the two red circles on the smile of thy cheeks. To-night we will feast. Hast thou forgotten to-night is the Feast of the Lanterns, when all good Buddhists rejoice?"

He stood beside her rickshaw, in his imperial yellow garment hemmed with the rainbow waves of the sea, and smiled down into her eyes.

"But the spirit God of love, the foreign-born spirit God?" said Dong-Yung. "Shall we feast to him, too?"

"Nay, it is not fitting to feast to two gods at once," said Foh-Kyung. "Do as I have said."

He left her. Dong-Yung, riding through the sun-splashed afternoon, buying colored jewels and flowery perfume and making herself beautiful, yet felt uneasy. She had not quite understood. A dim knowledge advanced toward her like a wall of fog. She pressed her two hands against it and held it off—held it off by sheer mental refusal to understand. In the courtyard at home the children were playing with their lighted animals, drawing their gaudy paper ducks, luminous with candle-light, to and fro on little standards set on four wheels. At the gate hung a tall red-and-white lantern, and over the roof floated a string of candle-lit balloons. In the ancestral hall the great wife had lit the red candles, speared on their slender spikes, before the tablets. In the kitchen the cooks and amahs were busy with the feast-cooking. Candles were stuck everywhere on the tables and benches. They threw little pools of light on the floor before the stove and looked at the empty niche. In the night it was merely a black hole in the stove filled with formless shadow. She wished ——

"Dong-Yung, Flower in the House, where hast thou hidden the kitchen gods? Put them in their place." Foh-Kyung, still in imperial yellow, stood like a sun in the doorway.

Dong-Yung turned.

"But ——"

"Put them back, little Jewel in the Hair. It is not permitted to worship the spirit of God. There are bars and gates. The spirit of man must turn back in the searching, turn back to the images of plaster and paint."

Dong-Yung let the wall of fog slide over her. She dropped her resistance. She knew.

"Nay, not the spirit of man. It is but natural that the great God does not wish the importunings of a small wife. Worship thou alone the great God, and the shadow of that worship will fall on my heart."

"Nay, I cannot worship alone. My worship is not acceptable in the sight of the foreign God. My ways are not his ways."

Foh-Kyung's face was unlined and calm, yet Dong-Yung felt the hidden agony of his soul, flung back from its quest upon gods of plaster and paint.

"But I know the thoughts of thy heart, O Lord and Master, white and fragrant as the lily-buds that opened to-day. Has thy wish changed?"

"Nay, my wish is even the same, but it is not permitted to a man of two wives to be a follower of the spirit of God."

Dong-Yung had known it all along. This knowledge came with no surprise. It was she who kept him from the path of his desire!

"Put back the kitchen gods," said Foh-Kyung. "We will live and believe and die even as our fathers have done. The gate to the God of love is closed."

The feast was served. In the sky one moon blotted out a world of stars. Foh-Kyung sat alone, smoking. Laughter and talk filled the women's wing. The amahs and coolies were resting outside. A thin reed of music crept in and out among the laughter and talk, from the reed flute of the cook. The kitchen was quite empty. One candle on the table sent up a long smoky tongue of flame. The fire still smoldered in the corner. A little wind shook the cypress-branches without, and carried the scent of the opened lilies into the room.

Dong-Yung, still arrayed for feasting, went to the pigskin trunk in the corner, fitted the key from her belt into the carven brass wings of the butterfly, and lifted out the kitchen gods. One in each hand, she held them, green and gold. She put them back in their niche, and lifted up a bowl of rice to their feet, and beat her head on the ground before them.

"Forgive me, O my kitchen gods, forgive my injurious hands and heart; but the love of my master is even greater than my fear of you. Ye and I, we bar the gates of heaven from him."

When she had finished, she tiptoed around the room, touching the chairs and tables with caressing fingers. She stole out into the

courtyard, and bent to inhale the lily fragrance, sweeter by night than by day. "An auspicious day," the gate-keeper had said that morning. Foh-Kyung had stood beside her, with his feet in the sunshine; she remembered the light in his eyes. She bent her head till the fingers of the lily-petals touched her cheek. She crept back through the house, and looked at Foh-Kyung smoking. His eyes were dull, even as are the eyes of sightless bronze Buddhas. No, she would never risk going in to speak to him. If she heard the sound of his voice, if he called her "little Flower of the House," she would never have the strength to go. So she stood in the doorway and looked at him much as one looks at a sun, till wherever else one looks, one sees the same sun against the sky.

In the formless shadow she made a great obeisance, spreading out her arms and pressing the palms of her hands against the floor.

"O my Lord and Master," she said, with her lips against the boards of the floor, softly, so that none might hear her—"O my Lord and Master, I go. Even a small wife may unbar the gates of heaven."

First, before she went, she cast the two kitchen gods, green and gold, of ancient plaster, into the embers of the fire. There in the morning the cook-rice amahs found the onyx stones that had been their eyes. The house was still unlocked, the gate-keeper at the feast. Like a shadow she moved along the wall and through the gate. The smell of the lilies blew past her. Drums and chants echoed up the road, and the sounds of manifold feastings. She crept away down by the wall, where the moon laid a strip of blackness, crept away to unbar the gates of heaven for her lord and master.

CLOTHES MAKE THE MAN

By

BOOTH TARKINGTON

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CLOTHES MAKE THE MAN is taken from the novel, *Seventeen,* where it constitutes Chapters XXII, XXIII, and XXIV. It has a proper place in a collection of short stories because, like all other parts of *Seventeen,* its original magazine publication was in short story form.

NEWTON BOOTH TARKINGTON is a native of Indianapolis, Indiana. He was educated at Phillips Exeter Academy, Purdue University, and Princeton.

Like Hergesheimer, Tarkington was a long time learning to write successfully. He wrote steadily for eight years before his first novel, *The Gentleman from Indiana,* was accepted. Thereafter his success was assured.

Mr. Tarkington is our most prolific first rank writer. Novels, short stories, and plays have seemed to flow almost without effort from his pen; but we know that he takes infinite pains with what he writes. For the most part, his material is taken from the life about him, but it is never sordid. Like all truly great writers, he knows that photographic portrayal of what is base and spirtually dead is not true realism.

His style is as graceful as his own personality is gracious. Not only is he deservedly popular for what he has written, but his genuine kindliness and fineness have endeared him to the American public.

His many novels include *The Gentleman from Indiana, Alice Adams, The Plutocrat,* and *Claire Ambler.* The best of the short stories are *Cherry, Monsieur Beaucaire,* the *Penrod* and the *Penrod and Sam* stories, and the stories in *Seventeen.* Tarkington's latest book, *The World Does Move,* is an interesting and characteristic account of the changes in manners and customs and attitudes that have come about since his youth.

CLOTHES MAKE THE MAN

By Booth Tarkington

I

MR. AND MRS. BAXTER, having walked a scorched half-mile from church, drooped thankfully into wicker chairs upon their front porch, though their little daughter, Jane, who had accompanied them, immediately darted away, swinging her hat by its ribbon and skipping as lithesomely as if she had just come forth upon a cool morning.

"I don't know how she does it!" her father moaned, glancing after her and drying his forehead temporarily upon a handkerchief. "That would merely kill me dead, after walking in this heat."

Then, for a time, the two were content to sit in silence, nodding to occasional acquaintances who passed in the desultory after-church procession. Mr. Baxter fanned himself with sporadic little bursts of energy which made his straw hat creak, and Mrs. Baxter sighed with the heat, and gently rocked her chair.

But as a group of five young people passed along the other side of the street, Mr. Baxter abruptly stopped fanning himself, and, following the direction of his gaze, Mrs. Baxter ceased to rock. In half-completed attitudes they leaned slightly forward, sharing one of those pauses of parents who unexpectedly behold their offspring.

These parents were beholding their seventeen-year-old son, William.

"My soul!" said William's father. "Hasn't that girl gone home *yet?*"

"He looks pale to me," Mrs. Baxter murmured absently. "I don't think he seems at all well, lately."

During seventeen years Mr. Baxter had gradually learned not to

protest anxieties of this kind, unless he desired to argue with no prospect of ever getting a decision. "Hasn't she got any *home?*" he demanded testily. "Isn't she ever going to quit visiting the Parchers and let people have a little peace?"

Mrs. Baxter disregarded this outburst as he had disregarded her remark about William's pallor. "You mean Miss Pratt?" she inquired dreamily, her eyes following the progress of her son. "No, he really doesn't look well at all."

"Is she going to visit the Parchers all summer?" Mr. Baxter insisted.

"She already has, about," said Mrs. Baxter.

"Look at that boy!" the father grumbled. "Mooning along with those other moon-calves—can't even let her go to church alone! I wonder how many weeks of time, counting it out in hours, he's wasted that way this summer?"

"Oh, I don't know! You see, he never goes there in the evening."

"What of that? He's there all day, isn't he? What do they find to talk about? That's the mystery to me! Day after day, hours and hours —— My soul! What do they *say?*"

Mrs. Baxter laughed indulgently. "People are always wondering that about the other ages. Poor Willie! I think that a great deal of the time their conversation would be probably about as inconsequent as it is now. You see Willie and Joe Bullitt are walking one on each side of Miss Pratt, and Johnnie Watson has to walk behind with May Parcher. Joe and Johnnie are there about as much as Willie is, and, of course, it's often his turn to be nice to May Parcher. He hasn't many chances to be tête-à-tête with Miss Pratt."

"Well, she ought to go home. I want that boy to get back into his senses. He's in an awful state."

"I think she is going soon," said Mrs. Baxter. "The Parchers are to have a dance for her Friday night, and I understand there's to be a floor laid in the yard and great things. It's a farewell party."

"That's one mercy, anyhow!"

"And if you wonder what they say," she resumed, "why, probably they're all talking about the party. And when Willie *is* alone with

her—well, what does anybody say?" Mrs. Baxter interrupted herself to laugh. "Jane, for instance—she's always fascinated by that darkey, Genesis, when he's at work here in the yard, and they have long, long talks; I've seen them from the window. What on earth do you suppose they talk about? That's where Jane is now. She knew I told Genesis I'd give him something if he'd come and freeze the ice-cream for us to-day, and when we got here she heard the freezer and hopped right around there. If you went out to the back porch you'd find them talking steadily—but what on earth about I couldn't guess to save my life!"

And yet nothing could have been simpler: as a matter of fact, Jane and Genesis (attended by Clematis, Genesis' dog) were talking about society. That is to say, their discourse was not sociologic; rather it was of the frivolous and elegant. Watteau * prevailed with them over John Stuart Mill †—in a word, they spoke of the *beau monde*.‡

Genesis turned the handle of the freezer with his left hand, allowing his right the freedom of gesture which was an intermittent necessity when he talked. In the matter of dress, Genesis had always been among the most informal of his race, but to-day there was a change almost unnerving to the Caucasian eye. He wore a balloonish suit of purple, strangely scalloped at pocket and cuff, and more strangely decorated with lines of small parasite buttons, in color blue, obviously buttons of leisure. His bulbous new shoes flashed back yellow fire at the embarrassed sun, and his collar (for he had gone so far) sent forth other sparkles, playing upon a polished surface over an inner graining of soot. Beneath it hung a simple, white, soiled evening tie, draped in a manner unintended by its manufacturer, and heavily overburdened by a green glass medallion of the Emperor Tiberius, set in brass.

"Yes'm," said Genesis. "Now I'm in 'at Swim—flyin' roun' ev'y

* Watteau: a French court painter of the time of Louis XIV
† John Stuart Mill: a political economist
‡ *beau monde:* fashionable world

night wif all lem blue-vein people—I say, 'Mus' go buy me some blue-vein clo'es! Ef I'm go'n a *start,* might's well start *high!'* So firs', I buy me thishere gol' necktie pin wi' thishere lady's face carved out o' green di'mon', sittin' in the middle all 'at gol'. 'Nen I buy me pair Royal King shoes. I got a frien' o' mine, thishere Blooie Bowers; he say Royal King shoes same kine o' shoes *he* wear, an' I walk straight in 'at sto' where they keep 'em at. 'Don' was'e my time showin' me no ole-time shoes,' I say. 'Run out some them big, yella, lump-toed Royal Kings befo' my eyes, an' firs' pair fit me I pay price, an' wear 'em right off on me!' 'Nen I got me thishere suit o' clo'es—*oh,* oh! Sign on 'em in window: 'Ef you wish to be bes'-dress' man in town take me home fer six dolluhs ninety-sevum cents.' ''At's kine o' suit Genesis need,' I say. 'Ef Genesis go'n' a start dressin' high, might's well start top!' "

Jane nodded gravely, comprehending the reasonableness of this view. "What made you decide to start, Genesis?" she asked earnestly. "I mean, how did it happen you began to get this way?"

"Well, suh, 't all come 'bout right like kine o' slidin' into it 'stid o' hoppin' an' jumpin'. I'z spen' the even' at 'at lady's house, Fanny, what cook nex' do', las' year. Well, suh, 'at lady Fanny, she quit privut cookin', she kaytliss——"

"She's what?" Jane asked. "What's that mean, Genesis—kaytliss?"

"She kaytuhs," he explained. "Ef it's a man you call him kaytuh; ef it's a lady she's a kaytliss. She does kaytun for all lem blue-vein fam'lies in town. She make ref'eshmuns, bring waituhs—'at's kaytun. You' maw give big dinnuh, she have Fanny kaytuh, an' don't take no trouble 'tall herself. Fanny take all 'at trouble."

"I see," said Jane. "But I don't see how her bein' a kaytliss started you to dressin' so high, Genesis."

"Thishere way. Fanny say, 'Look here, Genesis, I got big job t'morra night an' I'm man short, 'count o' havin' to have a 'nouncer.' "

"A what?"

"Fanny talk jes' that way. Goin' be big dinnuh-potty, an'

thishere blue-vein fam'ly tell Fanny they want whole lot of extry sploogin'; tell her put fine lookin' cullud man stan' by drawin'-room do'—ask ev'ybody name an' holler out whatever name they say, jes' as they walk in. Thishere fam'ly say they goin' show what's what, 'nis town, an' they boun' Fanny go git 'em a 'nouncer. 'Well, what's mattuh *you* doin' 'at 'nouncin'?' Fanny say. 'Who—me?' I tell her. 'Yes, you kin, too!' she say, an' she say she len' me 'at waituh suit yoosta b'long ole Henry Gimlet what die' when he owin' Fanny sixteen dolluhs—an' Fanny tuck an' keep 'at waituh suit. She use 'at suit on extry waituhs when she got some on her hands what ain' got no waituh suit. 'You wear 'at suit,' Fanny say, 'an' you be good 'nouncer, 'cause you' a fine, big man, an' got a big gran' voice; nen you learn befo' long be a waituh, Genesis, an' git dolluh an' half ev'y even' you waitin', 'sides all 'at money you make cuttin' grass daytime.' Well, suh, I'z stan' up doin' 'at 'nouncin' ve'y nex' night. White lady an' ge'lmun walk todes my do', I step up to 'em—I step up to 'em thisaway."

Here Genesis found it pleasant to present the scene with some elaboration. He dropped the handle of the freezer, rose, assumed a stately but ingratiating expression and "stepped up" to the imagined couple, using a pacing and rhythmic gait—a conservative prance, which plainly indicated the simultaneous operation of an orchestra. Then bending graciously, as though the persons addressed were of dwarfish stature, " 'Scuse me," he said, "but kin I please be so p'lite as to 'quiah you' name?" For a moment he listened attentively, then nodded, and, returning with the same aristocratic undulations to an imaginary doorway near the freezer, "Misto an' Missuz Orlosko Rinktum!" he proclaimed sonorously.

"Who?" cried Jane, fascinated. "Genesis, 'nounce that again, right away!"

Genesis heartily complied.

"Misto an' Missuz Orlosko Rinktum!" he bawled.

"Was that really their names?" she asked eagerly.

"Well, I kine o' fergit," Genesis admitted, resuming his work with the freezer. "Seem like I rickalect *somebody* got name good

deal like what I say, 'cause some mighty blue-vein names at 'at dinnuh-potty, yessuh! But I on'y git to be 'nouncer one time, cause Fanny tellin' me nex' fam'ly have dinnuh-potty make heap o' fun. Say I done my 'nouncin' *good,* but say what's use holler'n' names jes' fer some the neighbors or they own aunts an' uncles to walk in, when ev'ybody awready knows 'em? So Fanny pummote me to waituh, an' I roun' right in amongs' big doin's mos' ev'y night. Pass ice-cream, lemonade, lemon-ice, cake, sammitches. 'Lemme han' you li'l' mo' chicken-salad, ma'am'—' 'Low me be so kine as to git you f'esh cup coffee, suh'—'S way ole Genesis talkin' ev'y even' 'ese days!"

Jane looked at him thoughtfully. "Do you like it better than cuttin' grass, Genesis?" she asked.

He paused to consider.

"Yes'm—when ban' play all lem *tunes!* My goo'ness, do soun' gran'!"

"You can't do it to-night, though, Genesis," said Jane. "You haf to be quiet on Sunday nights, don't you?"

"Yes'm. Ain' got no mo' kaytun till nex' Friday even'."

"Oh, I bet that's the party for Miss Pratt at Mr. Parcher's!" Jane cried. "Didn't I guess right?"

"Yes'm. I reckon I'm a go'n a see one you' fam'ly 'at night; see him dancin'—wait on him at ref'eshmuns."

Jane's expression became even more serious than usual. "Willie? I don't know whether he's goin', Genesis."

"Lan' name!" Genesis exclaimed. "He die ef he don' git *in*vite to 'at ball!"

"Oh, he's invited," said Jane. "Only I think maybe he won't go."

"My goo'ness! Why ain't he goin'?"

Jane looked at her friend studiously before replying. "Well, it's a secret," she said, finally, "but it's a very inter'sting one, an' I'll tell you if you never tell."

"Yes'm; I ain't tellin' nobody."

Jane glanced round, then stepped a little closer and told the secret with the solemnity it deserved. "Well, when Miss Pratt first came

to visit Miss May Parcher, Willie used to keep papa's evening clo'es in his window-seat, an' mamma wondered what *had* become of 'em. Then, after dinner, he'd slip up there an' put 'em on him, an' go out through the kitchen an' call on Miss Pratt. Then mamma found 'em, an' she thought he oughtn't to do that, so she didn't tell him or anything, an' she didn't even tell papa, but she had the tailor make 'em ever an' ever so much bigger, 'cause they were gettin' too tight for papa. An' well, so after that, even if Willie could get 'em out o' mamma's clo'es-closet where she keeps 'em now, he'd look so funny in 'em he couldn't wear 'em. Well, an' then he couldn't go to pay calls on Miss Pratt in the evening since then because mamma says after he started to go there in that suit he couldn't go without it, or maybe Miss Pratt or the other ones that's in love of her would think it was pretty queer, an' maybe kind of expeck it was papa's all the time. Mamma says she thinks Willie must have worried a good deal over reasons to say why he'd always go in the daytime after that, an' never came in the evening, an' now they're goin' to have this party, an' she says he's been gettin' paler an' paler every day since he heard about it. Mamma says he's pale *some,* because Miss Pratt's goin' away, but she thinks it's a good deal more because, well, if he would wear those evening clo'es just to go *callin',* how would it be to go to that *party* an' not have any? That's what mamma thinks—an', Genesis, you promised you'd never tell as long as you live!"

"Yes'm. *I* ain' tellin'," Genesis chuckled. "I'm a go'n a git me one nem waituh suits befo' long, myse'f, so's I kin quit wearin' 'at ole Henry Gimlet suit what b'long to Fanny, an' have me a privut suit o' my own. They's a secon'-han' sto', ovuh on the avynoo, where they got swaller-tail suits all way f'um sevum dolluhs to nineteen dolluhs an' ninety-eight cents. I'm a——"

Jane started, interrupting him. *"'Sh!"* she whispered, laying a finger warningly upon her lips.

William had entered the yard at the back gate, and, approaching over the lawn, had arrived at the steps of the porch before Jane perceived him. She gave him an apprehensive look, but he passed

into the house absent-mindedly—and Mrs. Baxter was right, William did look pale.

"I guess he didn't hear us," said Jane, when he had disappeared into the interior. "He acks awful funny!" she added, thoughtfully. "First when he was in love of Miss Pratt, he'd be mad about somep'm almost every minute he was home. Couldn't anybody say *any*thing to him but he'd just behave as if it was frightful, an' then if you'd see him out walkin' with Miss Pratt, well, he'd look like—like——" Jane paused; her eye fell upon Clematis and by a happy inspiration she was able to complete her simile with remarkable accuracy. "He'd look like the way Clematis looks at people! That's just *exactly* the way he'd look, Genesis, when he was walkin' with Miss Pratt; an' then when he was home he got so quiet he couldn't answer questions an' wouldn't hear what anybody said to him at table or anywhere, an' papa'd just almost bust. Mamma 'n' papa'd talk about it, an' "—she lowered her voice—"an' I knew what they were talkin' about. Well, an' then he'd hardly ever get mad any more; he'd just sit in his room, an' sometimes he'd sit in there without any light, or he'd sit out in the yard all by himself all evening maybe; an' th' other evening after I was in bed I heard 'em, an' papa said—well, this is what papa told mamma." And again lowering her voice, she proffered the quotation from her father in a tone somewhat awestruck. "Papa said, by Gosh! if he ever 'a' thought a son of his could make such a Word * idiot of himself he almost wished we'd both been girls!"

Having completed this report in a violent whisper, Jane nodded repeatedly, for emphasis, and Genesis shook his head to show that he was as deeply impressed as she wished him to be. "I guess," she added, after a pause—"I guess Willie didn't hear anything you and I talked about him, or clo'es, or anything."

She was mistaken in part. William had caught no reference to himself, but he had overheard something, and he was now alone in his room, thinking about it almost feverishly. "A secon'-han'

* Jane would never say *damned,* even in a quotation.

sto', ovuh on the avynoo, where they got swaller-tail suits all way f'um sevum dolluhs to nineteen dolluhs an' ninety-eight cents."

. . . Civilization is responsible for certain longings in the breast of man—artificial longings, but sometimes as poignant as hunger and thirst. Of these the strongest are those of the maid for the bridal veil, of the lad for long trousers, and of the youth for a tailed coat of state. To the gratification of this last, only a few of the early joys in life are comparable. Indulged youths, too rich, can know, to the unctuous full, neither the longing nor the gratification; but one such as William, in "moderate circumstances," is privileged to pant for his first evening clothes as the hart panteth after the water-brook—and sometimes, to pant in vain. Also, this was a crisis in William's life: in addition to his yearning for such apparel, he was racked by a passionate urgency.

As Jane had so precociously understood, unless he should somehow manage to obtain the proper draperies he could not go to the farewell dance for Miss Pratt. Other unequipped boys could go in their ordinary "best clothes," but William could not; for, alack! he had dressed too well too soon!

He was in desperate case.

The sorrow of the approaching great departure was but the heavier because it had been so long deferred. To William it had seemed that this flower-strewn summer could actually end no more than he could actually die, but Time had begun its awful lecture, and even Seventeen was listening. Miss Pratt, that magic girl, was going home.

II

To the competent twenties, hundreds of miles suggesting no impossibilities, such departures may be rending but not tragic. Implacable, the difference to Seventeen! Miss Pratt was going home, and Seventeen could not follow; it could only mourn upon the lonely shore, tracing little angelic footprints left in the sand.

To Seventeen such a departure is final; it is a vanishing.

And now it seemed possible that William might be deprived even of the last romantic consolations: of the "last waltz together," of the last, last "listening to music in the moonlight together"; of all those sacred lasts of the "last evening together."

He had pleaded strongly for a "dress-suit" as a fitting recognition of his seventeenth birthday anniversary, but he had been denied by his father with a jocularity more crushing than rigor. Since then—in particular since the arrival of Miss Pratt—Mr. Baxter's temper had been growing steadily more and more even. That is, as affected by William's social activities, it was uniformly bad. Nevertheless, after heavy brooding, William decided to make one final appeal before he resorted to measures which the necessities of despair had caused him to contemplate.

He wished to give himself every chance for a good effect; therefore he did not act hastily, but went over what he intended to say, rehearsing it with a few appropriate gestures, and even taking some pleasure in the pathetic dignity of this performance, as revealed by occasional glances at the mirror of his dressing-table. In spite of these little alleviations, his trouble was great and all too real, for, unhappily, the previous rehearsal of an emotional scene does not prove the emotion insincere.

Descending, he found his father and mother still sitting upon the front porch. Then, standing before them, solemn-eyed, he uttered a preluding cough, and began:

"Father," he said, in a loud voice, "I have come to——"

"Dear me!" Mrs. Baxter exclaimed, not perceiving that she was interrupting an intended oration. "Willie, you *do* look pale! Sit down, poor child; you oughtn't to walk so much in this heat."

"Father," William repeated. "Fath——"

"I suppose you got her safely home from church," Mr. Baxter said. "She might have been carried off by footpads if you three boys hadn't been along to take care of her!"

But William persisted heroically. "Father," he said. "Father, I have come to——"

"What on earth's the matter with you?" Mr. Baxter ceased to fan himself, Mrs. Baxter stopped rocking, and both stared, for it had dawned upon them that something unusual was beginning to take place.

William backed to the start and tried it again. "Father, I have come to——" He paused and gulped, evidently expecting to be interrupted, but both of his parents remained silent, regarding him with puzzled surprise. "Father," he began once more, "I have come—I have come to—to place before you something I think it's your duty as my father to undertake, and I have thought over this step before laying it before you."

"My soul!" said Mr. Baxter under his breath. "My soul!"

"At my age," William continued, swallowing, and fixing his earnest eyes upon the roof of the porch to avoid the disconcerting stare of his father, "at my age there's some things that ought to be done and some things that ought not to be done. If you asked me what I thought *ought* to be done, there is only one answer: When anybody as old as I am has to go out among other young men his own age that already got one, like anyway half of them *have,* who I go with, and their fathers have already taken such a step, because they felt it was the only right thing to do, because at my age and the young men I go with's age, it *is* the only right thing to do, because that is something nobody could deny, at my age——" Here William drew a long breath, and, deciding to abandon that sentence as irrevocably tangled, began another: "I have thought over this step, because there comes a time to every young man when they must lay a step before their father before something happens that they would be sorry for. I have thought this undertaking over, and I am certain it would be your honest duty——"

"My soul!" gasped Mr. Baxter. "I thought I knew you pretty well, but you talk like a stranger to *me!* What is all this? What you *want?"*

"A dress-suit!" said William.

He had intended to say a great deal more before coming to the point, but, though through nervousness he had lost some threads of

his rehearsed plea, it seemed to him he was getting along well and putting his case with some distinction and power. He was surprised and hurt, therefore, to hear his father utter a wordless shout in a tone of wondering derision.

"I have more to say——" William began.

But Mr. Baxter cut him off. "A dress-suit!" he cried. "Well, I'm glad you were talking about *something,* because I honestly thought it must be too much sun!"

At this, the troubled William brought his eyes down from the porch roof and forgot his rehearsal. He lifted his hand appealingly. "Father," he said, "I *got* to have one!"

"'Got to'!" Mr. Baxter laughed a laugh that chilled the supplicant through and through. "At your age I thought I was lucky if I had *any* suit that was fit to be seen in. You're too young, Willie. I don't want you to get your mind on such stuff, and if I have my way, you won't have a dress-suit for four years more, anyhow."

"Father, I *got* to have one. I got to have one right away!" The urgency in William's voice was almost tearful. "I don't ask you to have it made, or to go to expensive tailors, but there's plenty of good ready-made ones that only cost about forty dollars; they're advertised in the paper. Father, wouldn't you spend just forty dollars? I'll pay it back when I'm in business. I'll work——"

Mr. Baxter waved all this aside. "It's not the money. It's the principle that I'm standing for, and I don't intend——"

"Father, *won't* you do it?"

"No, I will not!"

William saw that sentence had been passed and all appeals for a new trial denied. He choked, and rushed into the house without more ado.

"Poor boy!" his mother said.

"Poor boy nothing!" fumed Mr. Baxter. "He's almost lost his mind over that Miss Pratt. Think of his coming out here and starting a regular debating society declamation before his mother and father! Why, I never heard anything like it in my life! I don't like to hurt his feelings, and I'd give him anything I could afford

that would do him any good, but all he wants it for now is to splurge around in at this party before that little yellow-haired girl! I guess he can wear the kind of clothes most of the other boys wear—the kind *I* wore at parties—and never thought of wearing anything else. What's the world getting to be like? Seventeen years old and throws a fit because he can't have a dress-suit!"

Mrs. Baxter looked thoughtful. "But—but suppose he felt he couldn't go to the dance unless he wore one, poor boy ——"

"All the better," said Mr. Baxter firmly. "Do him good to keep away and get his mind on something else."

"Of course," she suggested, with some timidity, "forty dollars isn't a great deal of money, and a ready-made suit, just to begin with ——"

Naturally Mr. Baxter perceived whither she was drifting. "Forty dollars isn't a thousand," he interrupted, "but what you want to throw it away for? One reason a boy of seventeen oughtn't to have evening clothes is the way he behaves with *any* clothes. Forty dollars! Why, only this summer he sat down on Jane's open paint-box, twice in one week!"

"Well—Miss Pratt *is* going away, and the dance will be her last night. I'm afraid it would really hurt him to miss it. I remember once, before we were engaged—that evening before papa took me abroad, and you ——"

"It's no use, mamma," he said. "We were both in the twenties—why, *I* was six years older than Willie, even then. There's no comparison at all. I'll let him order a dress-suit on his twenty-first birthday and not a minute before. I don't believe in it, and I intend to see that he gets all this stuff out of his system. He's got to learn some hard sense!"

Mrs. Baxter shook her head doubtfully, but she said no more. Perhaps she regretted a little that she had caused Mr. Baxter's evening clothes to be so expansively enlarged—for she looked rather regretful. She also looked rather incomprehensible, not to say cryptic, during the long silence which followed, and Mr. Baxter

resumed his rocking, unaware of the fixity of gaze which his wife maintained upon him—a thing the most loyal will do sometimes.

The incomprehensible look disappeared before long; but the regretful one was renewed in the mother's eyes whenever she caught glimpses of her son, that day, and at the table, where William's manner was gentle—even toward his heartless father.

Underneath that gentleness, the harried self of William was no longer debating a desperate resolve, but had fixed upon it, and on the following afternoon Jane chanced to be a witness of some resultant actions. She came to her mother with an account of them.

"Mamma, what you s'pose Willie wants of those two ole market baskets that were down cellar?"

"Why, Jane?"

"Well, he carried 'em in his room, an' then he saw me lookin', an' he said 'G'way from here!' an' shut the door. He looks so funny! What's he want of those ole baskets, mamma?"

"I don't know. Perhaps he doesn't even know, himself, Jane."

But William did know, definitely. He had set the baskets upon chairs, and now, with pale determination, he was proceeding to fill them. When his task was completed the two baskets contained:

One heavy-weight winter suit of clothes.
One light-weight summer suit of clothes.
One cap.
One straw hat.
Two pairs of white flannel trousers.
Two Madras shirts.
Two flannel shirts.
Two silk shirts.
Seven soft collars.
Three silk neckties.
One crocheted tie.
Eight pairs of socks.
One pair of patent-leather shoes.
One pair of tennis-shoes.
One overcoat.

Some underwear.

One two-foot shelf of books, consisting of several sterling works upon mathematics, in a damaged condition; five of Shakespeare's plays, edited for schools and colleges, and also damaged; a work upon political economy and another upon the science of physics; *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary; How to Enter a Drawing-Room and Five Hundred Other Hints; Witty Sayings from Here and There; Lorna Doone; Quentin Durward; The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes;* a very old copy of *Moths;* and a small Bible.

William spread handkerchiefs upon the two over-bulging cargoes, that their nature might not be disclosed to the curious, and, after listening a moment at his door, took the baskets, one upon each arm, then went quickly down the stairs and out of the house, out of the yard, and into the alley—by which route he had modestly chosen to travel.

. . . After an absence of about two hours, he returned empty-handed and anxious. "Mother, I want to speak to you," he said, addressing Mrs. Baxter in a voice which clearly proved the strain of these racking days. "I want to speak to you about something important."

"Yes, Willie?"

"Please send Jane away. I can't talk about important things with a child in the room."

Jane naturally wished to stay, since he was going to say something important. "Mamma, do I *haf* to go?"

"Just a few minutes, dear."

Jane walked submissively out of the door, leaving it open behind her. Then, having gone about six feet farther, she halted, and, preserving a breathless silence, consoled herself for her banishment by listening to what was said, hearing it all as satisfactorily as if she had remained in the room. Quiet, thoughtful children, like Jane, avail themselves of these little pleasures oftener than is suspected.

"Mother," said William, with great intensity, "I want to ask you please to lend me three dollars and sixty cents."

"What for, Willie?"

"Mother, I just ask you to lend me three dollars and sixty cents."

"But what *for?"*

"Mother, I don't feel I can discuss it any; I simply ask you: Will you lend me three dollars and sixty cents?"

Mrs. Baxter laughed gently. "I don't think I could, Willie, but certainly I should want to know what for."

"Mother, I am going on eighteen years of age, and when I ask for a small sum of money like three dollars and sixty cents, I think I might be trusted to know how to use it for my own good without having to answer questions like a ch——"

"Why, Willie!" she exclaimed. "You ought to have plenty of money of your own."

"Of course I ought," he agreed warmly. "If you'd ask father to give me a regular allow——"

"No, no; I mean you ought to have plenty left out of that old junk and furniture I let you sell last month. You had nearly nine dollars!"

"That was five weeks ago," William explained wearily.

"But you certainly must have some of it left. Why, it was *more* than nine dollars, I believe! I think it was nearer ten. Surely you haven't——"

"Ye Gods!" cried the goaded William. "A person going on eighteen years old ought to be able to spend nine dollars in five weeks without everybody's acting like it was a crime! Mother, I ask you the simple question: Will you *please* lend me three dollars and sixty cents?"

"I don't think I ought to, dear. I'm sure your father wouldn't wish me to, unless you'll tell me what you want it for. In fact, I won't consider it at all unless you do tell me."

"You won't do it?" he quavered.

She shook her head gently. "You see, dear, I'm afraid the reason you don't tell me is because you know that I wouldn't give it to you if I knew what you wanted it for."

This perfect diagnosis of the case so disheartened him that after a few monosyllabic efforts to continue the conversation with dignity,

he gave it up, and left in such a preoccupation with despondency that he passed the surprised Jane in the hall without suspecting what she had been doing.

That evening, after dinner, he addressed to his father an impassioned appeal for three dollars and sixty cents, laying such stress of pathos on his principal argument that if he couldn't have a dress-suit, at least he ought to be given three dollars and sixty *cents* (the emphasis is William's), that Mr. Baxter was moved in the direction of consent—but not far enough. "I'd like to let you have it, Willie," he said, excusing himself for refusal, "but your mother felt *she* oughtn't to do it, unless you'd say what you wanted it for, and I'm sure she wouldn't like me to do it. I can't let you have it unless you get her to say she wants me to."

Thus advised, the unfortunate made another appeal to his mother the next day, and, having brought about no relaxation of the situation, again petitioned his father, on the following evening. So it went, the torn and driven William turning from parent to parent; and surely, since the world began, the special sum of three dollars and sixty cents has never been so often mentioned in any one house and in the same space of time as it was in the house of the Baxters during Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of that oppressive week.

But on Friday William disappeared after breakfast and did not return to lunch.

III

Mrs. Baxter was troubled. During the afternoon she glanced often from the open window of the room where she had gone to sew, but the peaceful neighborhood continued to be peaceful, and no sound of the harassed footsteps of William echoed from the pavement. However, she saw Genesis arrive (in his week-day costume) to do some weeding, and Jane immediately skip forth for mingled purposes of observation and conversation.

"What *do* they say?" thought Mrs. Baxter, observing that both

Jane and Genesis were unusually animated. But for once that perplexity was to be dispersed. After an exciting half-hour Jane came flying to her mother, breathless.

"Mamma," she cried, "I know where Willie is! Genesis told me, 'cause he saw him, an' he talked to him while he was doin' it."

"Doing what? Where?"

"Mamma, listen! What you think Willie's doin'? I bet you can't g——"

"Jane!" Mrs. Baxter spoke sharply. "Tell me what Genesis said, at once."

"Yes'm. Willie's over in a lumber-yard that Genesis comes by on his way from over on the avynoo where all the colored people live—an' he's countin' knot-holes in shingles."

"He is *what?"*

"Yes'm. Genesis knows all about it, because he was thinkin' of doin' it himself, only he says it would be too slow. This is the way it is, mamma—listen, mamma, because this is just exactly the way it is. Well, this lumber-yard man got into some sort of a fuss because he bought millions an' millions of shingles, mamma, that had too many knots in, an' the man don't want to pay for 'em, or else the store where he bought 'em won't take 'em back, an' they got to prove how many shingles are bad shingles, or somep'm, an' anyway, mamma, that's what Willie's doin'. Every time he comes to a bad shingle, mamma, he puts it somewheres else, or somep'm like that, mamma, an' every time he's put a thousand bad shingles in this other place, they give him six cents. He gets the six cents to keep, mamma—an' that's what he's been doin' all day!"

"Good gracious!"

"Oh, but that's nothing, mamma—just you wait till you hear the rest. *That* part of it isn't anything a *tall,* mamma! You wouldn't hardly notice that part of it if you knew the other part of it, mamma. Why, that isn't *anything!"* Jane made demonstrations of scorn for the insignificant information already imparted.

"Jane!"

"Yes'm?"

"I want to know everything Genesis told you," said her mother, "and I want you to tell it as quickly as you can."

"Well, I *am* tellin' it, mamma!" Jane protested. "I'm just *beginning* to tell it. I can't tell it unless there's a beginning, can I? How could there be *anything* unless you had to begin it, mamma?"

"Try your best to go on, Jane!"

"Yes'm. Well, Genesis says—Mamma!" Jane interrupted herself with a little outcry. "Oh! I bet *that's* what he had those two market-baskets for! Yes, sir! That's just what he did! An' then he needed the rest o' the money and you an' papa wouldn't give him any, and so he began countin' shingles to-day 'cause to-night's the night of the party an' he just *hass* to have it!"

Mrs. Baxter, who had risen to her feet, recalled the episode of the baskets and sank into a chair. "How did Genesis know Willie wanted forty dollars, and if Willie's pawned something how did Genesis know *that?* Did Willie tell Gen ——"

"Oh, no, mamma, Willie didn't want forty dollars—only fourteen!"

"But he couldn't get even the cheapest ready-made dress-suit for fourteen dollars."

"Mamma, you're gettin' it all mixed up!" Jane cried. "Listen, mamma! Genesis knows all about a second-hand store over on the avynoo; an' it keeps 'most everything, an' Genesis says it's the nicest store! It keeps waiter suits all the way up to nineteen dollars and ninety-nine cents. Well, an' Genesis wants to get one of those suits, so he goes in there all the time an' talks to the man an' bargains an' bargains with him, 'cause Genesis says this man is the bargainest man in the wide worl', mamma! That's what Genesis says. Well, an' so this man's name is One-eye Beljus, mamma. That's his name, an' Genesis says so. Well, an' so this man that Genesis told me about, that keeps the store—I mean One-eye Beljus, mamma—well, One-eye Beljus had Willie's name written down in a book, an' he knew Genesis worked for fam'lies that have boys like Willie in 'em, an' this morning One-eye Beljus showed Genesis Willie's name written down in this book, an' One-eye Beljus asked Genesis if he

knew anybody by that name an' all about him. Well, an' so at first Genesis pretended he was tryin' to remember, because he wanted to find out what Willie went there for. Genesis didn't tell any stories, mamma; he just pretended he couldn't remember, an' so, well, One-eye Beljus kept talkin' an' pretty soon Genesis found out all about it. One-eye Beljus said Willie came in there and tried on the coat of one of those waiter suits ——"

"Oh, no!" gasped Mrs. Baxter.

"Yes'm, an' One-eye Beljus said it was the only one that would fit Willie, an' One-eye Beljus told Willie that suit was worth fourteen dollars, an' Willie said he didn't have any money, but he'd like to trade something else for it. Well, an' so One-eye Beljus said this was an awful fine suit an' the only one he had that had b'longed to a white gentleman. Well, an' so they bargained, an' bargained, an' bargained, an' *bargained!* An' then, well, an' so at last Willie said he'd go an' get everything that b'longed to him, an' One-eye Beljus could pick out enough to make fourteen dollars' worth, an' then Willie could have the suit. Well, an' so Willie came home an' put everything he had that b'longed to him into those two baskets, mamma—that's what he did, 'cause Genesis says he told One-eye Beljus it was everything that b'longed to him, an' that would take two baskets, mamma. Well, then, an' so he told One-eye Beljus to pick out fourteen dollars' worth, an' One-eye Beljus ast Willie if he didn't have a watch. Well, Willie took out his watch, an' One-eye Beljus said it was an awful bad watch but he would put it in for a dollar; an' he said, 'I'll put your necktie pin in for forty cents more,' so Willie took it out of his necktie; an' then One-eye Beljus said it would take all the things in the baskets to make I forget how much, mamma, an' the watch would be a dollar more, an' the pin forty cents, an' that would leave just three dollars an' sixty cents more for Willie to pay before he could get the suit."

Mrs. Baxter's face had become suffused with high color, but she wished to know all that Genesis had said, and, mastering her feel-

ings with an effort, she told Jane to proceed—a command obeyed after Jane had taken several long breaths.

"Well, an' so the worst part of it is, Genesis says, it's because that suit is haunted."

"What!"

"Yes'm," said Jane solemnly; "Genesis says it's haunted. Genesis says everybody over on the avynoo knows all about that suit, an' he says that's why One-eye Beljus never could sell it before. Genesis says One-eye Beljus tried to sell it to a colored man for three dollars, but the man said he wouldn't put it on for three hunderd dollars, an' Genesis says *he* wouldn't, either, because it belonged to a Dago waiter that—that——" Jane's voice sank to a whisper of unctuous horror. She was having a wonderful time! "Mamma, this Dago waiter, he lived over on the avynoo, an' he took a case-knife he'd sharpened—*an' he cut a lady's head off with it!*"

Mrs. Baxter screamed faintly.

"An' he got hung, mamma! If you don't believe it you can ask One-eye Beljus—I guess *he* knows! An' you can ask——"

"Hush!"

"An' he sold this suit to One-eye Beljus when he was in jail, mamma. He sold it to him before he got hung, mamma."

"Hush, Jane!"

But Jane couldn't hush now. "An' he had that suit on when he cut the lady's head off, mamma, an' that's why it's haunted. They cleaned it all up excep' a few little spots of bl——"

"Jane!" shouted her mother. "You must not talk about such things, and Genesis mustn't tell you stories of that sort!"

"Well, how could he help it, if he told me about Willie?" Jane urged reasonably.

"Never mind! Did that crazy ch—— Did Willie *leave* the baskets in that dreadful place?"

"Yes'm—an' his watch an' pin," Jane informed her impressively. "An' One-eye Beljus wanted to know if Genesis knew Willie, because One-eye Beljus wanted to know if Genesis thought Willie could get the three dollars an' sixty cents, an' One-eye Beljus wanted

to know if Genesis thought he could get anything more out of him besides that. He told Genesis he hadn't told Willie he *could* have the suit, after all; he just told him he *thought* he could, but he wouldn't say for certain till he brought him the three dollars and sixty cents. So Willie left all his things there, an' his watch an'——"

"That will do!" Mrs. Baxter's voice was sharper than it had ever been in Jane's recollection. "I don't need to hear any more—and I don't *want* to hear any more!"

Jane was justly aggrieved. "But mamma, it isn't *my* fault!"

Mrs. Baxter's lips parted to speak, but she checked herself. "Fault?" she said gravely. "I wonder whose fault it really is!"

And with that she went hurriedly into William's room, and made a brief inspection of his clothes-closet and dressing-table. Then, as Jane watched her in awed silence, she strode to the window and called loudly:

"Genesis!"

"Yes'm?" came the voice from below.

"Go to that lumber-yard where Mr. William is at work and bring him here to me at once. If he declines to come, tell him——" Her voice broke oddly; she choked, but Jane could not decide with what emotion. "Tell him—tell him I ordered you to use force if necessary! Hurry!"

"Yes'm!"

Jane ran to the window in time to see Genesis departing seriously through the back gate.

"Mamma——"

"Don't talk to me now, Jane," Mrs. Baxter said crisply. "I want you to go down in the yard, and when Willie comes tell him I'm waiting for him here in his own room. And don't come with him, Jane. Run!"

"Yes, mamma." Jane was pleased with this appointment; she anxiously desired to be the first to see how Willie "looked."

. . . He looked flurried and flustered and breathless, and there were blisters upon the reddened palms of his hands. "What on

earth's the matter, mother?" he asked, as he stood panting before her. "Genesis said something was wrong, and he said you told him to hit me if I wouldn't come."

"Oh, *no!*" she cried. "I only meant I thought perhaps you wouldn't obey any ordinary message——"

"Well, well, it doesn't matter, but please hurry and say what you want to because I got to get back and——"

"No," Mrs. Baxter said quietly. "You're not going back to count any more shingles, Willie. How much have you earned?"

He swallowed, but spoke bravely. "Thirty-six cents. But I've been getting lots faster the last two hours and there's a good deal of time before six o'clock. Mother——"

"No," she said. "You're going over to that horrible place where you've left your clothes and your watch and all those other things in the two baskets, and you're going to bring them home at once."

"Mother!" he cried aghast. "Who told you?"

"It doesn't matter. You don't want your father to find out, do you? Then get those things back here as quickly as you can. They'll have to be fumigated after being in that den."

"They've never been out of the baskets," he protested hotly, "except just to be looked at. They're *my* things, mother, and I had a right to do what I needed to with 'em, didn't I?" His utterance became difficult. "You and father just *can't* understand—and you won't do anything to help me——"

"Willie, you can go to the party," she said gently. "You didn't need those frightful clothes at all."

"I do!" he cried. "I *got* to have 'em! I *can't* go in my day clo'es! There's a reason you wouldn't understand why I can't. I just *can't!*"

"Yes," she said, "you can go to the party."

"I can't either! Not unless you give me three dollars and twenty-four cents, or unless I can get back to the lumber-yard and earn the rest before——"

"No!" And the warm color that had rushed over Mrs. Baxter during Jane's sensational recital returned with a vengeance. Her

eyes flashed. "If you'd rather I sent a policeman for those baskets, I'll send one. I should prefer to do it—much! And to have that rascal arrested. If you don't want me to send a policeman you can go for them yourself, but you must start within ten minutes, because if you don't I'll telephone headquarters. Ten minutes, Willie, and I mean it!"

He cried out, protesting. She would make him a thing of scorn forever and soil his honor, if she sent a policeman. Mr. Beljus was a fair and honest tradesman, he explained passionately, and had not made the approaches in this matter. Also, the garments in question, though not entirely new, nor of the highest mode, were of good material and in splendid condition. Unmistakably they were evening clothes, and such a bargain at fourteen dollars that William would guarantee to sell them for twenty after he had worn them this one evening. Mr. Beljus himself had said that he would not even think of letting them go at fourteen to anybody else, and as for the two poor baskets of worn and useless articles offered in exchange, and a bent scarfpin and a worn-out old silver watch that had belonged to great-uncle Ben—why, the ten dollars and forty cents allowed upon them was beyond all ordinary liberality; it was almost charity. There was only one place in town where evening clothes were rented, and the suspicious persons in charge had insisted that William obtain from his father a guarantee to insure the return of the garments in perfect condition. So that was hopeless. And wasn't it better, also, to wear clothes which had known only one previous occupant (as was the case with Mr. Beljus's offering) than to hire what chance hundreds had hired? Finally, there was only one thing to be considered and this was the fact that William *had* to have those clothes!

"Six minutes," said Mrs. Baxter, glancing implacably at her watch. "When it's ten I'll telephone."

And the end of it was, of course, victory for the woman—victory both moral and physical. Three-quarters of an hour later she was unburdening the contents of the two baskets and putting the things back in place, illuminating these actions with an expression

of strong distaste—in spite of broken assurances that Mr. Beljus had not more than touched any of the articles offered to him for valuation.

. . . At dinner, which was unusually early that evening, Mrs. Baxter did not often glance toward her son; she kept her eyes from that white face and spent most of her time in urging upon Mr. Baxter that he should be prompt in dressing for a card-club meeting which he and she were to attend that evening. These admonitions of hers were continued so pressingly that Mr. Baxter, after protesting that there was no use in being a whole hour too early, groaningly went to dress without even reading his paper.

William had retired to his own room, where he lay upon his bed in the darkness. He heard the evening noises of the house faintly through the closed door: voices and the clatter of metal and china from the far-away kitchen, Jane's laugh in the hall, the opening and closing of the doors. Then his father seemed to be in distress about something. William heard him complaining to Mrs. Baxter, and though the words were indistinct, the tone was vigorously plaintive. Mrs. Baxter laughed and appeared to make light of his troubles, whatever they were—and presently their footsteps were audible from the stairway; the front door closed emphatically, and they were gone.

Everything was quiet now. The open window showed as a greenish oblong set in black, and William knew that in a little while there would come through the stillness of that window the distant sound of violins. That was a moment he dreaded with a dread that ached. And as he lay on his dreary bed, he thought of brightly lighted rooms where other boys were dressing eagerly, faces and hair shining, hearts beating high—boys who would possess this last evening, and the "last waltz together," the last smile and the last sigh.

It did not once enter his mind that he could go to the dance in his "best suit," or that possibly the other young people at the party would be too busy with their own affairs to notice particularly what he wore. It was the unquestionable and granite fact, to his mind,

that the whole derisive World would know the truth about his earlier appearances in his father's clothes. And that was a form of ruin not to be faced. In the protective darkness and seclusion of William's bedroom, it is possible that smarting eyes relieved themselves by blinking rather energetically; it is even possible that there was a minute damp spot upon the pillow. Seventeen cannot always manage the little boy yet alive under all the coverings.

Now arrived that moment he had most painfully anticipated, and dance-music drifted on the night;—but there came a tapping on his door and a soft voice spoke.

"Will-ee?"

With a sharp exclamation William swung his legs over the edge of the bed and sat up. Of all things he desired not, he desired no conversation with, or on the part of, Jane. But he had forgotten to lock his door—the handle turned, and a dim little figure marched in.

"Willie, Adelia's goin' to put me to bed."

"You g'way from here," he said huskily. "I haven't got time to talk to you. I'm busy."

"Well, you can wait a minute, can't you?" she asked reasonably, "I haf to tell you a joke on mamma."

"I don't want to hear any jokes!"

"Well, I *haf* to tell you this one 'cause she told me to! Oh!" Jane clapped her hand over her mouth and jumped up and down, offering a fantastic silhouette against the light of the open door. "Oh, oh, *oh!*"

"What's matter?"

"She said I mustn't, *mustn't* tell that she told me to tell! My goodness! I forgot that! Mamma took me off alone right after dinner, an' she told me to tell you this joke on her a little after she an' papa had left the house, but she said, 'Above all *things*,' she said, '*don't* let Willie know *I* said to tell him.' That's just what she said, an' here that's the very first thing I had to go an' do!"

"Well, what of it?"

Jane quieted down. The pangs of her remorse were lost in her

love of sensationalism, and her voice sank to the thrilling whisper which it was one of her greatest pleasures to use. "Did you hear what a fuss papa was makin' when he was dressin' for the card-party?"

"*I* don't care if ——"

"He had to go in his reg'lar clo'es!" whispered Jane triumphantly. "An' this is the joke on mamma: you know that tailor that let papa's dress-suit way, way out; well, mamma thinks that tailor must think she's crazy, or somep'm, 'cause she took papa's dress-suit to him last Monday to get it pressed for this card-party, an' she guesses he must of understood her to tell him to do lots besides just pressin' it. Anyway, he went an' altered it, an' he took it way, way *in* again; an' this afternoon when it came back it was even tighter'n what it was in the first place, an' papa couldn't *begin* to get into it! Well, an' so it's all pressed an' everything, an' she stopped on the way out, an' whispered to me that she'd got so upset over the joke on her that she couldn't remember where she put it when she took it out of papa's room after he gave up tryin' to get inside of it. An' that," cried Jane—"that's the funniest thing of all! Why, it's layin' right on her bed this very minute."

In one bound William leaped through the open door. Two seconds sufficed for his passage through the hall to his mother's bedroom--and there, neatly spread upon the lace coverlet and brighter than coronation robes, fairer than Joseph's sacred coat, It lay!

THE MONKEY'S PAW

By

W. W. JACOBS

From THE LADY OF THE BARGE; *published by Frederick A. Stokes Company. By permission of the author and the publisher.*

Three wishes have served as the basis for many a tale since the world began; but Mr. Jacob's use of the idea is so novel and striking as to make his story stand quite apart from any other treatment of the theme.

WILLIAM WYMARK JACOBS was born in London and educated in private schools. In 1899 he resigned his civil service position and has since devoted himself to writing.

Mr. Jacobs has for some years been England's foremost humorous writer. For the most part, his stories have dealt with the English water front, and they are really funny. His characters are channel sailors, barge captains, dock watchmen, and small tradesmen, together with their wives and sweethearts. Mr. Morris, in *The Monkey's Paw,* might have appeared in one of these tales.

Yet genuinely amusing as they are, these stories are not truly great, probably because greatness in fiction demands something beyond the single element of humor. In *The Monkey's Paw,* however, this talented writer worked with material upon which he could show his real ability, and the result is a story of genuine power.

Among W. W. Jacob's many volumes of short stories, are *Many Cargoes, A Master of Craft, At Sunwich Port, The Lady of the Barge, Short Cruises, Dialstone Lane,* and *Salthaven.*

THE MONKEY'S PAW

By W. W. Jacobs

I

WITHOUT, the night was cold and wet, but in the small parlor of Laburnam Villa the blinds were drawn and the fire burned brightly. Father and son were at chess, the former, who possessed ideas about the game involving radical changes, putting his king into such sharp and unnecessary perils that it even provoked comment from the white-haired old lady knitting placidly by the fire.

"Hark at the wind," said Mr. White, who, having seen a fatal mistake after it was too late, was amiably desirous of preventing his son from seeing it.

"I'm listening," said the latter, grimly surveying the board as he stretched out his hand. "Check."

"I should hardly think that he'd come tonight," said his father, with his hand poised over the board.

"Mate," replied the son.

"That's the worst of living so far out," bawled Mr. White, with sudden and unlooked-for violence; "of all the beastly, slushy, out-of-the-way places to live in, this is the worst. Pathway's a bog, and the road's a torrent. I don't know what people are thinking about. I suppose because only two houses on the road are let, they think it doesn't matter."

"Never mind, dear," said his wife soothingly; "perhaps you'll win the next one."

Mr. White looked up sharply, just in time to intercept a knowing

glance between mother and son. The words died away on his lips, and he hid a guilty grin in his thin gray beard.

"There he is," said Herbert White, as the gate banged to loudly and heavy footsteps came toward the door.

The old man rose with hospitable haste, and opening the door, was heard condoling with the new arrival. The new arrival also condoled with himself, so that Mrs. White said, "Tut, tut!" and coughed gently as her husband entered the room, followed by a tall burly man, beady of eye and rubicund of visage.

"Sergeant-Major Morris," he said, introducing him.

The sergeant-major shook hands, and taking the proffered seat by the fire, watched contentedly while his host got out whisky and tumblers and stood a small copper kettle on the fire.

At the third glass his eyes got brighter, and he began to talk, the little family circle regarding with eager interest this visitor from distant parts, as he squared his broad shoulders in the chair and spoke of wild scenes and doughty deeds, of wars and plagues and strange peoples.

"Twenty-one years of it," said Mr. White, nodding at his wife and son. "When he went away he was a slip of a youth in the warehouse. Now look at him."

"He don't look to have taken much harm," said Mrs. White politely.

"I'd like to go to India myself," said the old man, "just to look round a bit, you know."

"Better where you are," said the sergeant-major, shaking his head. He put down the empty glass and, sighing softly, shook it again.

"I should like to see those old temples and fakirs and jugglers," said the old man. "What was that you started telling me the other day about a monkey's paw or something, Morris?"

"Nothing," said the soldier hastily. "Leastways, nothing worth hearing."

"Monkey's paw?" said Mrs. White curiously.

"Well, it's just a bit of what you might call magic, perhaps," said the sergeant-major off-handedly.

His three listeners leaned forward eagerly. The visitor absent-mindedly put his empty glass to his lips and then set it down again. His host filled it for him.

"To look at," said the sergeant-major, fumbling in his pocket, "it's just an ordinary little paw, dried to a mummy."

He took something out of his pocket and proffered it. Mrs. White drew back with a grimace, but her son, taking it, examined it curiously.

"And what is there special about it?" inquired Mr. White, as he took it from his son and, having examined it, placed it upon the table.

"It had a spell put on it by an old fakir," said the sergeant-major, "a very holy man. He wanted to show that fate ruled people's lives, and that those who interfered with it did so to their sorrow. He put a spell on it so that three separate men could each have three wishes from it."

His manner was so impressive that his hearers were conscious that their light laughter jarred somewhat.

"Well, why don't you have three, sir?" said Herbert White cleverly.

The soldier regarded him in the way that middle age is wont to regard presumptuous youth. "I have," he said quietly, and his blotchy face whitened.

"And did you really have the three wishes granted?" asked Mrs. White.

"I did," said the sergeant-major, and his glass tapped against his strong teeth.

"And has anybody else wished?" persisted the old lady.

"The first man had his three wishes, yes," was the reply. "I don't know what the first two were, but the third was for death. That's how I got the paw."

His tones were so grave that a hush fell upon the group.

"If you've had your three wishes, it's no good to you now, then, Morris," said the old man at last. "What do you keep it for?"

The soldier shook his head. "Fancy, I suppose," he said slowly.

"I did have some idea of selling it, but I don't think I will. It has caused enough mischief already. Besides, people won't buy. They think it's a fairy tale, some of them, and those who do think anything of it want to try it first and pay me afterward."

"If you could have another three wishes," said the old man, eyeing him keenly, "would you have them?"

"I don't know," said the other. "I don't know."

He took the paw, and dangling it between his forefinger and thumb, suddenly threw it upon the fire. White, with a slight cry, stooped down and snatched it off.

"Better let it burn," said the soldier solemnly.

"If you don't want it, Morris," said the other man, "give it to me."

"I won't," said his friend doggedly. "I threw it on the fire. If you keep it, don't blame me for what happens. Pitch it on the fire again, like a sensible man."

The other shook his head and examined his new possession closely. "How do you do it?" he inquired.

"Hold it up in your right hand and wish aloud," said the sergeant-major; "but I warn you of the consequences."

"Sounds like the *Arabian Nights*," said Mrs. White, as she rose and began to set the supper. "Don't you think you might wish for four pairs of hands for me?"

Her husband drew the talisman from his pocket and then all three burst into laughter as the sergeant-major, with a look of alarm on his face, caught him by the arm.

"If you must wish," he said gruffly, "wish for something sensible."

Mr. White dropped it back into his pocket, and placing chairs, motioned his friend to the table. In the business of supper the talisman was partly forgotten, and afterward the three sat listening in an enthralled fashion to a second installment of the soldier's adventures in India.

"If the tale about the monkey's paw is not more truthful than those he has been telling us," said Herbert, as the door closed behind their guest, just in time for him to catch the last train, "we shan't make much out of it."

"Did you give him anything for it, father?" inquired Mrs. White, regarding her husband closely.

"A trifle," said he, coloring slightly. "He didn't want it, but I made him take it. And he pressed me again to throw it away."

"Likely," said Herbert, with pretended horror. "Why, we're going to be rich, and famous, and happy. Wish to be an emperor, father, to begin with; then you can't be henpecked."

He darted round the table, pursued by the maligned Mrs. White armed with an antimacassar.

Mr. White took the paw from his pocket and eyed it dubiously. "I don't know what to wish for, and that's a fact," he said slowly. "It seems to me I've got all I want."

"If you only cleared the house, you'd be quite happy, wouldn't you?" said Herbert, with his hand on his shoulder. "Well, wish for two hundred pounds, then; that'll just do it."

His father, smiling shamefacedly at his own credulity, held up the talisman, as his son, with a solemn face somewhat marred by a wink at his mother, sat down at the piano and struck a few impressive chords.

"I wish for two hundred pounds," said the old man distinctly.

A fine crash from the piano greeted the words, interrupted by a shuddering cry from the old man. His wife and son ran toward him.

"It moved," he cried, with a glance of disgust at the object as it lay on the floor. "As I wished it twisted in my hands like a snake."

"Well, I don't see the money," said his son, as he picked it up and placed it on the table, "and I bet I never shall."

"It must have been your fancy, father," said his wife, regarding him anxiously.

He shook his head. "Never mind, though; there's no harm done, but it gave me a shock all the same."

They sat down by the fire again while the two men finished their pipes. Outside, the wind was higher than ever, and the old man

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Antimacassar: a piece of embroidered cloth placed on the back of a chair to keep the chair clean.

started nervously at the sound of a door banging upstairs. A silence unusual and depressing settled upon all three, which lasted until the old couple rose to retire for the night.

"I expect you'll find the cash tied up in a big bag in the middle of your bed," said Herbert, as he bade them good night, "and something horrible squatting up on top of the wardrobe watching you as you pocket your ill-gotten gains."

He sat alone in the darkness, gazing at the dying fire, and seeing faces in it. The last face was so horrible and so simian that he gazed at it in amazement. It got so vivid that, with a little uneasy laugh, he felt on the table for a glass containing a little water to throw over it. His hand grasped the monkey's paw, and with a little shiver he wiped his hand on his coat and went up to bed.

II

In the brightness of the wintry sun next morning as it streamed over the breakfast table Herbert laughed at his fears. There was an air of prosaic wholesomeness about the room which it had lacked on the previous night, and the dirty, shriveled little paw was pitched on the sideboard with a carelessness which betokened no great belief in its virtues.

"I suppose all old soldiers are the same," said Mrs. White. "The idea of our listening to such nonsense! How could wishes be granted in these days? And if they could, how could two hundred pounds hurt you, father?"

"Might drop on his head from the sky," said the frivolous Herbert.

"Morris said the things happened so naturally," said his father, "that you might if you so wished attribute it to coincidence."

"Well, don't break into the money before I come back," said Herbert, as he rose from the table. "I'm afraid it'll turn you into a mean, avaricious man, and we shall have to disown you."

His mother laughed, and following him to the door, watched him down the road, and returning to the breakfast table, was very

happy at the expense of her husband's credulity. All of which did not prevent her from scurrying to the door at the postman's knock, nor prevent her from referring somewhat shortly to retired sergeant-majors of bibulous habits when she found that the post brought a tailor's bill.

"Herbert will have some more of his funny remarks, I expect, when he comes home," she said, as they sat at dinner.

"I dare say," said Mr. White, pouring himself out some beer; "but for all that, the thing moved in my hand; that I'll swear to."

"You thought it did," said the old lady soothingly.

"I say it did," replied the other. "There was no thought about it; I had just—— What's the matter?"

His wife made no reply. She was watching the mysterious movements of a man outside, who, peering in an undecided fashion at the house, appeared to be trying to make up his mind to enter. In mental connection with the two hundred pounds, she noticed that the stranger was well dressed and wore a silk hat of glossy newness. Three times he paused at the gate, and then walked on again. The fourth time he stood with his hand upon it, and then with sudden resolution flung it open and walked up the path. Mrs. White at the same moment placed her hands behind her, and hurriedly unfastening the strings of her apron, put that useful article of apparel beneath the cushion of her chair.

She brought the stranger, who seemed ill at ease, into the room. He gazed at her furtively and listened in a preoccupied fashion as the old lady apologized for the appearance of the room, and her husband's coat, a garment which he usually reserved for the garden. She then waited as patiently as her sex would permit for him to broach his business, but he was at first strangely silent.

"I—was asked to call," he said at last, and stooped and picked a piece of cotton from his trousers. "I come from Maw and Meggins."

The old lady started. "Is anything the matter?" she asked breathlessly. "Has anything happened to Herbert? What is it? What is it?"

Her husband interposed. "There, there, mother," he said hastily.

"Sit down, and don't jump to conclusions. You've not brought bad news, I'm sure, sir," and he eyed the other wistfully.

"I'm sorry ——" began the visitor.

"Is he hurt?" demanded the mother.

The visitor bowed in assent. "Badly hurt," he said quietly, "but he is not in any pain."

"Oh, thank God!" said the old woman, clasping her hands. "Thank God for that! Thank ——"

She broke off suddenly as the sinister meaning of the assurance dawned upon her and she saw the awful confirmation of her fears in the other's averted face. She caught her breath, and turning to her slower-witted husband, laid her trembling old hand upon his. There was a long silence.

"He was caught in the machinery," said the visitor at length, in a low voice.

"Caught in the machinery," repeated Mr. White, in a dazed fashion, "yes."

He sat staring blankly out at the window, and taking his wife's hand between his own, pressed it as he had been wont to do in their old courting days nearly forty years before.

"He was the only one left to us," he said, turning gently to the visitor. "It is hard."

The other coughed, and rising, walked slowly to the window. "The firm wished me to convey their sincere sympathy with you in your great loss," he said, without looking round. "I beg that you will understand I am only their servant and merely obeying orders."

There was no reply; the old woman's face was white, her eyes staring, and her breath inaudible; on the husband's face was a look such as his friend the sergeant might have carried into his first action.

"I was to say that Maw and Meggins disclaim all responsibility," continued the other. "They admit no liability at all, but in consideration of your son's services they wish to present you with a certain sum as compensation."

Mr. White dropped his wife's hand, and rising to his feet, gazed

with a look of horror at his visitor. His dry lips shaped the words, "How much?"

"Two hundred pounds," was the answer.

Unconscious of his wife's shriek, the old man smiled faintly, put out his hands like a sightless man, and dropped, a senseless heap, to the floor.

III

In the huge new cemetery, some two miles distant, the old people buried their dead, and came back to a house steeped in shadow and silence. It was all over so quickly that at first they could hardly realize it, and remained in a state of expectation as though of something else to happen—something else which was to lighten this load, too heavy for old hearts to bear. But the days passed, and expectation gave place to resignation—the hopeless resignation of the old, sometimes miscalled apathy. Sometimes they hardly exchanged a word, for now they had nothing to talk about, and their days were long to weariness.

It was about a week after that, that the old man, waking suddenly in the night, stretched out his hand and found himself alone. The room was in darkness, and the sound of subdued weeping came from the window. He raised himself in bed and listened.

"Come back," he said tenderly. "You will be cold."

"It is colder for my son," said the old woman, and wept afresh.

The sound of her sobs died away on his ears. The bed was warm, and his eyes heavy with sleep. He dozed fitfully, and then slept until a sudden wild cry from his wife awoke him with a start.

"The monkey's paw!" she cried wildly. "The monkey's paw!"

He started up in alarm. "Where? Where is it? What's the matter?"

She came stumbling across the room toward him. "I want it," she said quietly. "You've not destroyed it?"

"It's in the parlor, on the bracket," he replied, marveling. "Why?"

She cried and laughed together, and bending over, kissed his cheek.

"I only just thought of it," she said hysterically. "Why didn't I think of it before? Why didn't you think of it?"

"Think of what?" he questioned.

"The other two wishes," she replied rapidly. "We've only had one."

"Was not that enough?" he demanded fiercely.

"No," she cried triumphantly; "we'll have one more. Go down and get it quickly, and wish our boy alive again."

The man sat up in bed and flung the bedclothes from his quaking limbs. "Good God, you are mad!" he cried, aghast.

"Get it," she panted; "get it quickly, and wish—Oh, my boy, my boy!"

Her husband struck a match and lit the candle. "Get back to bed," he said unsteadily. "You don't know what you are saying."

"We had the first wish granted," said the old woman feverishly; "why not the second?"

"A coincidence," stammered the old man.

"Go and get it and wish," cried his wife quivering with excitement.

The old man turned and regarded her, and his voice shook. "He has been dead ten days, and besides he—I would not tell you else, but—I could only recognize him by his clothing. If he was too terrible for you to see then, how now?"

"Bring him back," cried the old woman, and dragged him toward the door. "Do you think I fear the child I have nursed?"

He went down in the darkness, and felt his way to the parlor, and then to the mantelpiece. The talisman was in its place, and a horrible fear that the unspoken wish might bring his mutilated son before him ere he could escape from the room seized upon him, and he caught his breath as he found that he had lost the direction of the door. His brow cold with sweat, he felt his way round the table, and groped along the wall until he found himself in the small passage with the unwholesome thing in his hand.

Even his wife's face seemed changed as he entered the room. It was white and expectant, and to his fears seemed to have an unnatural look upon it. He was afraid of her.

"Wish!" she cried, in a strong voice.

"It is foolish and wicked," he faltered.

"Wish!" repeated his wife.

He raised his hand. "I wish my son alive again."

The talisman fell to the floor, and he regarded it shudderingly. Then he sank trembling into a chair as the old woman, with burning eyes, walked to the window and raised the blind.

He sat until he was chilled with the cold, glancing occasionally at the figure of the old woman peering through the window. The candle end, which had burnt below the rim of the china candlestick, was throwing pulsating shadows on the ceiling and walls, until, with a flicker larger than the rest, it expired. The old man, with an unspeakable sense of relief at the failure of the talisman, crept back to his bed, and a minute or two afterward the old woman came silently and apathetically beside him.

Neither spoke, but both lay silently listening to the ticking of the clock. A stair creaked, and a squeaky mouse scurried noisily through the wall. The darkness was oppressive, and after lying for some time screwing up his courage, he took the box of matches, and striking one, went downstairs for a candle.

At the foot of the stairs the match went out, and he paused to strike another, and at the same moment a knock, so quiet and stealthy as to be scarcely audible, sounded on the front door.

The matches fell from his hand. He stood motionless, his breath suspended until the knock was repeated. Then he turned and fled swiftly back to his room, and closed the door behind him. A third knock sounded through the house.

"What's that?" cried the old woman, starting up.

"A rat," said the old man, in shaking tones—"a rat. It passed me on the stairs."

His wife sat up in bed listening. A loud knock resounded through the house.

"It's Herbert!" she screamed. "It's Herbert!"

She ran to the door, but her husband was before her, and catching her by the arm, held her tightly.

"What are you going to do?" he whispered hoarsely.

"It's my boy; it's Herbert!" she cried, struggling mechanically. "I forgot it was two miles away. What are you holding me for? Let go. I must open the door."

"For God's sake don't let it in," cried the old man, trembling.

"You're afraid of your own son," she cried, struggling. "Let me go. I'm coming, Herbert; I'm coming."

There was another knock, and another. The old woman with a sudden wrench broke free and ran from the room. Her husband followed to the landing, and called after her appealingly as she hurried downstairs. He heard the chain rattle back and the bottom bolt drawn slowly and stiffly from the socket. Then the old woman's voice, strained and panting.

"The bolt," she cried loudly. "Come down. I can't reach it."

But her husband was on his hands and knees groping wildly on the floor in search of the paw. If he could only find it before the thing outside got in. A perfect fusillade of knocks reverberated through the house, and he heard the scraping of a chair as his wife put it down in the passage against the door. He heard the creaking of the bolt as it came slowly back, and at the same moment he found the monkey's paw, and frantically breathed his third and last wish.

The knocking ceased suddenly, although the echoes of it were still in the house. He heard the chair drawn back and the door opened. A cold wind rushed up the staircase, and a long loud wail of disappointment and misery from his wife gave him courage to run down to her side, and then to the gate beyond. The street lamp flickering opposite shone on a quiet and deserted road.

THE TRAWLER

By

JAMES B. CONNOLLY

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Deep-sea fishermen still ply their trade "out of Gloucester." But most of the vessels are motor driven now, and their cruises are often of just a day's duration. The old-time hunters of the sea were a sturdy, virile race, who lived in the almost constant danger of death but were not oppressed by its shadow.

JAMES BRENDAN CONNOLLY, our greatest writer of sea stories, was born on the sea-coast—in South Boston. He attended the Boston public and parochial schools, and studied for a short time in the Scientific School of Harvard.

He is fully equipped to write about the sea and about fine, upstanding men that sail upon it, because he has known the sea well and is a fine, upstanding man himself. Theodore Roosevelt admired him, and, when he was President, gave Mr. Connolly the privilege of cruising on a war vessel.

This writer of daring deeds has had his share of physical adventure. In 1896 he won an Olympic championship; he served in the Spanish War; ten years later he was in the United States navy; he saw something of the Great War from the decks of a troopship.

James B. Connolly has written as capably as he has lived. His short stories and sea songs are well constructed, virile, and clean. Many of his stories have been collected in book form and fill some ten volumes. Among these the best known are *Out of Gloucester, The Deep Sea's Toll, Open Water,* and *Head Winds.*

THE TRAWLER

By James B. Connolly

I

TO JOHN SNOW'S home in Gloucester came the tale this night of how Arthur Snow was washed from the deck of Hugh Glynn's vessel and lost at sea; and it was Saul Haverick, his sea clothes still on him, who brought the word.

"I'm telling you, John Snow," said Saul—and he out of breath almost with the telling—"and others than me will by an' by be telling you, what a black night it was, with a high-running sea and wind to blow the last coat o' paint off the vessel, but o' course he had to be the first o' the fleet—nothing less would do him—to make the market with his big ketch. It was for others, not for him, to show the way to take in sail, he said, and not a full hour before it happened that was." Such was Saul Haverick's ending.

John Snow said nothing; Mrs. Snow said nothing. Saul looked to me, but I gave no sign that I had heard him. Only John Snow's niece, Mary, looking up from her hands folded in her lap, said: "Surely you must find it painful, Saul Haverick, to ship with such a wicked man and take the big shares of money that fall to his crew?"

"Eh!" said Saul, frightened-like at her. "I'm not denying that he is a great fish killer, Mary Snow, and that we haven't shared some big trips with him; but it is like his religion, I'm telling you, to be able to say how he allowed no man ever he crossed tacks with to work to wind'ard of him. He's that vain he'd drive vessel, himself, and all hands to the bottom afore he'd let some folks think anything else of him."

"He lost my boy—we'll say no more of him," said John Snow.

"Ay," said Saul Haverick, "we'll speak no more of him. But I was Arthur's dory mate, John Snow, as you well know, and my heart is sick to think of it. I'll be going now," and go he did, softly and by way of the back stairs; and he no more than gone when a knock came to the door.

After a time, the clock on the mantel ticking loud among us, John Snow called out: "Come in!"

II

I remember how Hugh Glynn stepped within the door of John Snow's kitchen that night, and how he bent his head to step within; and, bending his head, took off his cap; and how he bowed to John Snow, Mrs. Snow, and Mary Snow in turn, and, facing John Snow, made as if to speak; but how his voice would not come, not until he had lifted his head yet higher and cleared his throat. And beginning again, he took a step nearer the middle of the floor, to where the light of the bracket lamp above the kitchen table shone full on his face. He was a grand man to look at, not only his face but the height and build of him, and he was fresh in from sea.

"John Snow—and you, Mrs. Snow—the *Arbiter's* to anchor in the stream, and her flag's to half-mast. And knowing that, maybe there's no need to say anything more."

Mrs. Snow said nothing, Mary Snow said nothing, but I remember how from under John Snow's brows the deep eyes glowed out.

"Go on," said John Snow at last.

Hugh Glynn went on. "Well, he was a good boy, your Arthur—maybe you'd like to be told that, even by me, though of course you that was his father, John Snow, and you that was his mother, Mrs. Snow, know better than anybody else what he was. Three nights ago it was, and we to the south'ard of Sable Island, in as nasty a breeze as I'd been in for some time. A living gale it was, a November no'wester—you know what that is, John Snow—but I'd all night

been telling the crew to be careful, for a sea there was to sweep to eternity whoever it could 've caught loose around deck. I could 've hove her to and let her lay, but I was never one to heave to my vessel—not once I'd swung her off for home. And there, God help me, is maybe my weakness.

"She was under her gaff tops'l, but I see she couldn't stand it. 'Boys,' says I, 'clew up that tops'l.' Which they did, and put it in gaskets, and your Arthur, I mind, was one of the four men to go aloft to clew it up. Never a lad to shirk was Arthur. Well, a stouter craft of her tonnage than the *Arbiter* may be never lived, nor no gear any sounder, but there are things o' God's that the things o' man were never meant to hold out against. Her jib flew to ribbons. 'Cut it clear!' I says, and nigh half the crew jumped for'ard. Half a dozen of the crew to once, but Arthur,—your Arthur, your boy, Mrs. Snow, your son, John Snow—he was quick enough to be among the half-dozen. Among a smart crew he was never left behind. It looked safe for us all then, coming on to morning, but who can ever tell? Fishermen's lives, they're men's lives for all that, and 'Have a care!' I called to them, myself to the wheel at the time, where, God knows, I was careful.

"Well, I saw this big fellow coming, a mountain of water with a snow-white top to it against the first light of the morning. And I made to meet it. A better vessel than the *Arbiter* the hand o' man never turned out—all Gloucester knows that—but, her best and my best, there was no lifting her out of it. Like great pipe-organs aroaring, this sea came, and over we went. Over we went, and I heard myself saying: 'God in heaven! You great old wagon, but are you gone at last?' And said it again when maybe there was a fathom of water over my head—her quarter was buried that deep and she that long coming up. Slow coming up she was, though up she came at last. But a man was gone."

He had stopped; but he went on. "It was Arthur, John Snow, and you, Mrs. Snow, who was gone. The boy you were expecting

Heave to: to point a vessel to the wind and so stop her headway.

to see in this very room by now, he was gone. Little Arthur that ten years ago, when first I saw him, I could 've swung to the ceiling of this room with my one finger—little Arthur was gone. Well, 'Over with a dory!' I said. And, gale and all, we over with a dory, with three of us in it. We looked and looked in that terrible dawn, but no use—no man short o' the Son o' God himself could 'a' stayed afloat, oilskins and red jacks, in that sea. But we had to look, and coming aboard the dory was stove in—smashed, like 'twas a china teacup and not a new banker's double dory, against the rail. And it was cold. Our frost-bitten fingers slipped from her ice-wrapped rail, and the three of us nigh came to joining Arthur, and Lord knows—a sin, maybe you'll say, to think it, John Snow—but I felt then as if I'd just as soon, for it was a hard thing to see a man go down to his death, maybe through my foolishness. And to have the people that love him to face in the telling of it—that's hard, too."

He drew a great breath. "And"—again a deep breath and a deepened note of pain—"that's what I've come to tell you, John Snow, and you, Mrs. Snow—how your boy Arthur was lost."

John Snow, at the kitchen table, I remember, one finger still in the pages of the black-lettered Bible he had been reading when Hugh Glynn stepped in, dropped his head on his chest and there let it rest. Mrs. Snow was crying out loud. Mary Snow said nothing, nor made a move, except to sit in her chair by the window and look to where, in the light of the kitchen lamp, Hugh Glynn stood.

There was a long quiet. Hugh Glynn spoke again. "Twenty years, John Snow, and you, Mrs. Snow—twenty good years I've been fishing out o' Gloucester, and in that time not much this side the western ocean I haven't laid a vessel's keel over. From Greenland to Hatteras I've fished, and many smart seamen I've been shipmates with—dory, bunk, and watch mates with in days gone by—and many a grand one of 'em I've known to find his grave under the green-white ocean, but never a smarter, never an abler fisherman than your boy Arthur. Boy and man I knew him, and, boy

and man, he did his work. I thought you might like to hear that from me, John Snow. And not much more than that can I say now, except to add, maybe, that when the Lord calls, John Snow, we must go, all of us. The Lord called and Arthur went. He had a good life before him—if he'd lived. He'd 've had his own vessel soon—could 've had one before this, if he'd wanted. But 'No,' he says, 'I'll stay with you yet a while, Captain Hugh.' He loved me and I loved him. 'I'll stay with you yet a while, Captain Hugh,' he says, but, staying with me, he was lost, and if I was old enough to have a grown son o' my own, if 'twas that little lad who lived only long enough to teach me what it is to have hope of a fine son and then to lose him, if 'twas that little lad o' mine grown up, I doubt could I feel it more, John Snow."

John Snow let slip his book and stood up, and for the first time looked fair at Hugh Glynn. "We know, Captain Glynn," John Snow said, "and I'm thanking you now. It's hard on me, hard on us all—our only son, captain—our only child. But, doubtless, it had to come. Some goes young and some goes old. It came to him maybe earlier than we ever thought for, or he thought for, no doubt, but—it come. And what you have told us, captain, is something for a man to be hearing of his son—and to be hearing it from you. And only this very night, with the word of you come home, my mind was hardening against you, Captain Glynn, for no denying I've heard hard things even as I've heard great things of you. But now I've met you, I know they mixed lies in the telling, Captain Glynn. And as for Arthur ——" John Snow stopped.

"As for Arthur"—'twas something to listen to, the voice of Hugh Glynn then, so soft there was almost no believing it—"as for Arthur, John Snow, he went as all of us will have to go if we stop long enough with the fishing."

"Ay, no doubt. As you may go yourself, captain?"

"As I expect to go, John Snow. To be lost some day—what else should I look forward to?"

"A black outlook, captain."

"Maybe, maybe. And yet a man's death at the last."

"So 'tis, captain—so 'tis."

John Snow and Hugh Glynn gripped hands, looked into each other's eyes, and parted—Hugh Glynn out into the night again and John Snow, with Mrs. Snow, to their room, from where I could hear her sobbing. I almost wanted to cry myself, but Mary Snow was there. I went over and stood behind her. She was looking after some one through the window.

It was Hugh Glynn walking down the steep hill. Turning the corner below, I remember how he looked back and up at the window.

For a long silence Mary Snow sat there and looked out. When she looked up and noticed me, she said: "It's a hard life, the bank fishing, Simon. The long, long nights out to sea, the great gales; and when you come home, no face, it may be, at the door to greet you."

"That it is, Mary."

"I saw his wife one day, Simon," said Mary Snow softly, "and the little boy with her. But a week before they were killed together that was; six years ago, and he, the great, tall man, striding between them. A wonderful, lovely woman and a noble couple, I thought. And the grand boy! And I at that heedless age, Simon, it was a rare person, be it man or woman, I ran ahead to see again."

"Come from the window, Mary," I said to that, "and we'll talk of things more cheerful."

"No, no, Simon—don't ask me to talk of light matters to-night." With that and a "Good night" she left me for her room.

Out into the street I went. John Snow's house stood at the head of a street atop of a steep hill, and I remember how I stood on the steps of John Snow's house and looked down the slope of the hill, and below the hill to the harbor, and beyond the harbor to clear water. It was a cold winter moonlight, and under the moon the sea heaved and heaved and heaved. There was no break in the surface of that sea that night, but as it heaved, terribly slow and heavy, I thought I could feel the steps beneath me heaving with it.

III

All that night I walked the streets and roads of Cape Ann, walking where my eyes would lose no sight of that sea to which I had been born, and thinking, thinking, thinking always to the surge and roar of it; and in the morning I went down to where Hugh Glynn's vessel lay in dock; and Hugh Glynn himself I found standing on the string-piece, holding by the hand and feeding candy to the little son of one of his crew, the while half a dozen men were asking him, one after the other, for what I, too, had come to ask.

My turn came. "I never met you to speak to before, Captain Glynn," I began, "but I was a friend of Arthur Snow's, and I was hopeful for the chance to ship with you in Arthur's place.

"My name is Simon Kippen," I went on, when he made no answer. "I was in John Snow's kitchen when you came in last night."

"I know"—he waved the hand that wasn't holding the little boy—"I know. And"—he almost smiled—"you're not afraid to come to sea with me?"

"Why more afraid," I said, "than you to take me with you?"

"You were a great friend of Arthur's?"

"A friend to Arthur—and more if I could," I answered.

He had a way of throwing his head back and letting his eyes look out, as from a distance, or as if he would take the measure of a man. 'Twas so he looked out at me now.

"He's a hard case of a man, shouldn't you say, Simon Kippen, who would play a shipmate foul?"

I said nothing to that.

"And, master or hand, we're surely all shipmates," he added; to which again I said nothing.

"Will you take Saul Haverick for dory mate?" he said again.

"I bear Saul Haverick no great love," I said; "but I have never heard he wasn't a good fisherman, and who should ask more than that of his mate in a dory?"

He looked out at me once more from the eyes that seemed so far back in his head; and from me he looked to the flag that was still to the half-mast of his vessel for the loss of Arthur Snow.

"We might ask something more in a dory mate at times, but he is a good fisherman," he answered at last. "A good hand to the wheel of a vessel, too, a cool head in danger, and one of the best judges of weather ever I sailed with. We're putting out in the morning. You can have the chance."

As to what was in my heart when I chose to ship with Hugh Glynn, I cannot say. There are those who tell us how they can explain every heart-beat, quick or slow, when aught ails them. I never could. I only know that, standing on the steps of Mary Snow's house the night before, all my thought was of Mary Snow sitting at the window and looking down the street after Hugh Glynn. And "God help you, Simon Kippen!" I found myself saying—"it's not you, nor Saul Haverick, nor any other living man will marry Mary Snow while Hugh Glynn lives, for there is no striving against the strength of the sea, and the strength of Hugh Glynn is the strength of the sea." But of what lay beyond that in my heart I could not say.

And now I was to sea with Hugh Glynn, and we not four days out of Gloucester when, as if but to show me the manner of man he was, he runs clear to the head of Placentia Bay, in Newfoundland, for a baiting on our way to the banks; and whoever knows Placentia Bay knows what that means, with the steam-cutters of the Crown patrolling, and their sleepless watches night and day aloft, to trap whoever would try to buy a baiting there against the law.

No harm fell to Hugh Glynn that time. No harm ever fell to him, fishermen said. Before ever the cutters could get sight of him he had sight of them; and his bait stowed below, safe away he came, driving wild-like past the islands of the bay, with never a side-light showing in the night, and not the first time he had done so.

"What d'y' say to that, Simon? Didn't we fool 'em good?" he

asked, when once more we were on the high seas and laying a free course for the western Banks.

"I'm grateful you did not ask me to go in any dory to bring the bait off," I answered.

"Why is that, Simon?" he asked, as one who has no suspicion.

"It was against the law, Captain Glynn."

"But a bad law, Simon?"

"Law is law," I answered to that.

He walked from the wheel, where I was, twice to the break of the vessel and back again and said, in a voice no louder than was needful to be heard above what loose water was splashing over her quarter to my feet: "Don't be put out with me for what I'll tell you now, Simon. You're a good lad, Simon, and come of good people, but of people that for hundreds o' years have thought but one way in the great matters of life. And when men have lived with their minds set in the one way so long, Simon, it comes hard for them to understand any other way. Such unfrequent ones as differed from your people, Simon, them they cast out from among them. I know, I know, Simon, because I come from people something like to them, only I escaped before it was too late to understand that people who split tacks with you do not always do it to fetch up on a lee shore."

"And from those other people, no doubt, Captain Glynn, you learned it was right to break a country's laws?"

"It wasn't breaking our country's law, Simon, nor any good man's law, to get a baiting last night. There are a lot of poor fishermen, Simon—as none know better than yourself—in Placentia Bay who have bait to sell, and there is a law which says they must not. But whose law? An American law? No. God's law? No. The law of those poor people in Placentia Bay? No. Some traders who have the making of the laws? Yes. And there you have it. If the Placentia Bay fishermen aren't allowed to sell bait to me, or the like of me, they will have to sell it to the traders themselves, but have to take their one dollar, where we of Gloucester would pay

them five, and, paying it, would give some of them and their families a chance to live."

He stood there in his rubber boots to his hips and his long great-coat to his ankles—he was one who never wore oilskins aboard ship—swinging with the swing of the plunging vessel as if he was built into her, and with his head thrown back and a smile, it may be, that was not a smile at all, and kept looking at me from out of eyes that were changeable as the sea itself.

"Don't you be getting mad with me, Simon, because we don't think alike in some things. To the devil with what people think of you—I've said that often enough, Simon, but not when they're good people. If some people don't like us, Simon, there will come no nourishment to our souls. Some day you're going to come to my way o' thinking, Simon, because we two are alike underneath."

"Alike!" I smiled to myself.

"Ay, alike at heart, Simon. We may look to be sailing wide-apart courses now, but maybe if our papers were examined 'twould be found we'd cleared for the same last port of call, Simon."

And no more talk of anything like that between us until the night before we were to leave the fishing grounds for home. In the afternoon we had set our trawls, and, leaving the vessel, he had said, "Our last set, boys. Let 'em lay to-night, and in the morning we'll haul"; and, returning aboard after setting, we had our supper and were making ready, such as had no watch to stand, to turn in for a good, long sleep against the labor of the morrow.

It was an oily sea that evening—a black, oily-smooth surface, lifting heavy and slow to a long swell. A smooth, oily sea—there is never any good comes out of it: but a beautiful sea notwithstanding, with more curious patterns of shifting colors than a man could count in a year playing atop of it. The colors coming and going and rolling and squirming—no women's shop ashore ever held such colors under the bright night-lights as under the low sun we saw

Trawl: a buoyed line, often of great length, to which short lines with baited hooks are attached at intervals.

this night on the western banks. It was a most beautiful and a most wicked sea to stop and look at.

And the sun went down that evening on a banking of clouds no less beautiful; a copper-red sun, and after 'twas gone, in lovely massy forms and splendid colors, were piled the clouds in all the western quarter. Such of the crew as stopped to speak of it did not like at all the look of that sea and sky, and some stopped beside the skipper to say it, he leaning against the main rigging in the way he had the while he would be studying the weather signs; but he made no answer to the crew, to that or any other word they had this evening—except to Saul Haverick, and to him only when he came up from supper complaining of not feeling well.

He was one could drive his crew till they could not see for very weariness; but he was one could nurse them, too. "Go below and turn in," was his word to Saul, "and stay there till you feel better. Call me, Simon, if I'm not up," he then said to me. "I'll stand Saul's watch with you, if Saul is no better."

It was yet black night when I was called to go on watch, and, Saul Haverick still complaining, I went to call the skipper. But he was already up and had been, the watch before me said, for the better part of the night. I found him leaning over the gunnels of the wind'ard nest of dories when I went on deck, gazing out on a sea that was no longer oily-smooth, though smooth enough, too, what was to be seen of it, under the stars of a winter night.

I stood on the break and likewise looked about me. To anchor, and alone, lay the vessel, with but her riding-light to mark her in the dark; alone and quiet, with never a neighbor to hail us, nor a sound from any living thing whatever. The very gulls themselves were asleep; only the fores'l, swaying to a short sheet, would roll part way to wind'ard and back to loo'ard, but quiet as could be even then, except for the little tapping noises of the reef-points when in and out the belly of the canvas would puff full up and let down again to what little wind was stirring.

It was a perfect, calm night, but no calm day was to follow. "Wicked weather ahead," said Hugh Glynn, and came and stood

beside me on the break. "A wicked day coming, but no help for it now till daylight comes to see our trawls to haul 'em in." And, as one who had settled that in his mind, he said no more of it, but from mainm'st to weather-rail he paced, and back again, and I took to pacing beside him.

A wonderful time, the night-watches at sea, for men to reveal themselves. Night and sky overhead and the wide ocean to your elbow—it drives men to thought of higher things. The wickedest of men—I have known them, with all manner of blasphemies befouling their lips by day, to become holy as little children in the watches of the night.

No blasphemer was Hugh Glynn, nor did the night hold terror for him; only as we paced the break together he spoke of matters that but himself and his God could know. It was hard to listen and be patient, though maybe it was as much of wonder as of impatience was taking hold of me as I listened.

"Do you never fear what men might come to think of you, Captain Glynn," I said, "confessing your very soul?"

"Ho, ho, that's it, is it?" He came to a sudden stop in our walking. "I should only confess the body—is that it, Simon Kippen? And, of course, when a man confesses to one thing of his own free will, you know there must be something worse behind? Is that it, Simon?" He chuckled beside me and, as if only to scandalize me, let his tongue run wilder yet.

His tales were of violations of laws such as it had been my religion to observe since I was a boy, and little except of the comic, ridiculous side of them all. The serious matters of life, if 'twas to judge by what he spoke to me that night, had small interest for him. But the queer power of the man! Had it been light where he could see me, I would have choked before ever I would let him hear me laugh; but he caught me smiling and straightened up, chuckling, to say: "Many other things you would smile at, too, Simon, if your bringing up would but allow the frost to thaw from your soul."

"And are reckless carryings-on and desperate chancing things to smile at?"

"O Simon, Simon, what a righteous man you're to be that never expects to see the day when no harbor this side of God's eternal sea will offer you the only safe and quiet mooring!"

Again I saw Mary Snow sitting at the window and looking down the street, and remembering how she had spoken of his lonely home, I said: "No doubt a man, like a vessel, Captain Glynn, should have always a mooring somewhere. A wonder you never thought of marrying again."

"I have thought of it."

"And with some one woman in mind?"

"It may be." He answered that, too, without a pause.

"And does she know?"

"It may be she knows. No knowing when they know, Simon. As men best understand the soul, so it is woman's best gift to understand the heart. But no fair play in me to ask her. I've had my great hour, and may not have it again with another. To offer the woman I have in mind anything less than a great love—it's not the kind of a man I am now, but the kind you are, Simon, should marry."

"It's not my kind that women like best, captain," I said.

"There are women to like every kind, Simon, and almost any kind of a woman would like your kind, Simon, if you would only learn to be less ashamed of what should be no shame. And it is you, already in love, who——"

"Me—in love?" I was like a vessel luffing to escape a squall, he had come on me so quickly.

"There it is, Simon—the upbringing of you that would never own up to what you think only yourself know. Three weeks to sea now you've been with me, and never a gull you've seen skirling to the west'ard that your eyes haven't followed. By no mistake do you watch them flying easterly. And when last evening I said, 'To-morrow, boys, we'll swing her off and drive her to the west'ard—to the west'ard and Gloucester!' the leaping heart in you

drove the blood to your very eyes. Surely that was not in sorrow, Simon?"

I made no answer.

Back and forth we paced, and talked as we paced, until the stars were dimming in the sky and the darkness fading from the sea. He stopped by the rail and stared, aweary-like, I thought, upon the waters.

"Simon, surely few men but would rather be themselves than anybody else that lives; but surely, too, no man sailing his own wide courses but comes to the day when he wishes he'd been less free in his navigation at times. You are honest and right, Simon. Even when you are wrong you are right, because for a man to do what he thinks is right, whether he be right or wrong, at the time, is to come to be surely right in the end. And it is the like of you, not yet aweary in soul or body, should mate with the women moulded of God to be the great mothers."

"You have done much thinking of some matters, captain," I said, not knowing what else to say.

"Alone at sea before the dawn—it is a wonderful hour for a man to cross-question himself, Simon; and not many nights of late years that I haven't seen the first light of dawn creeping up over the edge of the ocean. You marry Mary Snow, Simon."

He knew. What could I say? "I never thought to talk like this, captain, to a living man." In the growing light we now stood plain to each other's sight. "I don't understand what made me," I said, and said it, doubtless, with a note of shame.

"It may be just as well at your age that you don't understand every feeling that drives you on, Simon. Our brains grow big with age, but not our hearts. No matter what made you talk to-night, Simon, you marry Mary Snow."

I shook my head, but opened my heart to him, nevertheless. "I haven't the clever ways of Saul Haverick."

"Simon, it's my judgment this night that Mary Snow will never marry Saul Haverick."

"I'm glad to hear you think that, captain. 'Twould spoil her life—or any woman's."

"No, no," he said, quick-like. "Almost any woman's—yes; but not Mary Snow's—not altogether."

"And why?"

"Because she's too strong a soul to be spoiled of her life by any one man; because, no matter what man she marries, in her heart will be the image, not of the man her husband is, but of the man she'd wish him to be, and in the image of that man of her fancy will her children be born. Women moulded of God to be the mothers of great men are fashioned that way, Simon. They dream great dreams for their children's sake to come, and their hearts go out to the man who helps to make their dreams come true. If I've learned anything of good women in life, Simon, it is that. And, no saying, I may be wrong in that, too, Simon, but so far I've met no man who knows more of it than I to gainsay me. You marry Mary Snow, Simon, and she will bear you children who will bring new light to a darkening world."

The dawn was rolling up to us and the next on watch was on deck to relieve me; and the cook, too, with his head above the fo'c's'le hatch, was calling that breakfast was ready, and we said no more of that.

"Go for'ard, Simon," said Captain Glynn, "and have your breakfast. After breakfast we'll break out her anchor, and out dories and get that gear aboard afore it's too late. I'll go below and see how Saul's getting on."

With that he went into the cabin; but soon was back to take his seat at the breakfast-table; but no word of Saul until we had done eating, and he standing to go up on deck. Then he said: "Saul says he is still too sick to go in the dory with you, Simon."

And to that I said: "Well, I've hauled a halibut trawl single-handed before, Captain Glynn, and I can do it again if need be."

He put on his woollen cap, and across the table he looked at me, and I looked hard at him.

"This will be no morning to go single-handed in a dory, Simon.

Saul is not too sick, he says, to stand to the wheel and handle the vessel in my place. I will take his place along with you in the dory."

What he was thinking I could not say. His head was thrown back and his eyes looking out and down at me, as from the top of a far-away hill, and no more knowing what thoughts lay behind them than what ships lay beyond the horizon.

IV

It was a blood-red sunrise and a sea that was making when we left the vessel, but nothing to worry over in that. It might grow into a dory-killing day later, but so far it was only what all winter trawlers face more days than they can remember.

We picked up our nearest buoy, with its white-and-black flag floating high to mark it, and as we did, to wind'ard of us we could see, for five miles it might be, the twisted lines of the dories stretching. Rising to the top of a sea we could see them, sometimes one and sometimes another, lifting and falling, and the vessel lifting and falling to wind'ard of them all.

Hugh Glynn took the bow to do the hauling and myself the waist for coiling, and it was a grand sight to see him heave in on that heavy gear on that December morning. Many men follow the sea, but not many are born to it. Hugh Glynn was. Through the gurdy he hauled the heavy lines, swinging forward his shoulders, first one and then the other, swaying from his waist and all in time to the heave of the sea beneath him, and singing, as he heaved, the little snatches of songs that I believe he made up as he went along.

As he warmed to his work he stopped to draw off the heavy sweater that he wore over his woollen shirt, and made as if to throw it in the bow of the dory. "But no," he said, "it will get wet there. You put it on you, Simon, and keep it dry for me." He was a full size bigger than me in every way, and I put it on, over my cardigan jacket and under my oil-jacket, and it felt fine and comfortable on me.

It came time for me to spell him on the hauling, but he waved me back. "Let be, let be, Simon," he said, "it's fine, light exercise for a man of a brisk morning. It's reminding me of my hauling of my first trawl on the Banks. Looking back on it, now, Simon, I mind how the bravest sight I thought I ever saw was our string of dories racing afore the tide in the sea of that sunny winter's morning, and the vessel, like a mother to her little boats, standing off and on to see that nothing happened the while we hauled and coiled and gaffed inboard the broad-backed halibut. All out of myself with pride I was—I that was no more than a lad, but hauling halibut trawls with full-grown Gloucester men on the Grand Banks! And the passage home that trip, Simon! Oh, boy, that passage home!"

Without even a halt in his heaving in of the trawls, he took to singing:

"It came one day, as it had to come—
I said to you 'Good-by.'
'Good luck,' said you, 'and a fair, fair wind'—
Though you cried, as if to die
Was all there was ahead of you,
When we put out to sea;
But now, sweetheart, we're headed home
To the west'ard and to thee.

So blow, ye devils, and walk her home—
For she's the able *Lucy Foster.*
The woman I love is waiting me,
So drive the *Lucy* home to Gloucester.
O ho ho for this heaven-sent breeze,
Straight from the east and all you please!
Come along now, ye whistling gales,
The harder ye blow the faster she sails—
O my soul, there's a girl in Gloucester!"

He stopped to look over his shoulder at me. "Simon, boy, I mind

the days when there was no stopping the songs in me. Rolling to my lips o' themselves they would come, like foam to the crests of high seas. The days of a man's youth, Simon! All I knew of a gale of wind was that it stirred the fancies in me. It's the most wonderful thing will ever happen you, Simon."

"What is, skipper?"

"Why, the loving a woman and she loving you, and you neither knowing why, nor maybe caring."

"No woman loves me, skipper."

"She will, boy—never a fear."

He took to the hauling, and soon again to the singing:

"My lad comes running down the street,
And what says he to me?
Says he, 'O dadda, dadda,
And you're back again from sea!

'And did you ketch a great big fish
And bring him home to me?
O dadda, dadda, take me up
And toss me high!' says he.

My love looks out on the stormy morn,
Her thoughts are on the sea.
She says, ' 'Tis wild upon the Banks,'
And kneels in prayer for me.

'O Father, hold him safe!' she prays,
'And ——'

There's one, Simon!" he called.

A bad sea he meant. They had been coming and going, coming and going, rolling under and past us, and so far no harm; but this was one more wicked to look at than its mates. So I dropped the coiling lines and, with the oar already to the becket in the stern, whirled the dory's bow head on. The sea carried us high and far

Becket: a loop or bracket made of rope.

and, passing, left the dory deep with water, but no harm in that so she was still right side up.

"A good job, Simon," said Hugh Glynn the while we were bailing. "Not too soon and not too late."

That was the first one. More followed in their turn; but always the oar was handy in the becket, and it was but to whirl bow or stern to it with the oar when it came, not too soon to waste time for the hauling, but never, of course, too late to save capsizing; and bailing her out, if need be, when it was by.

Our trawl was in, our fish in the waist of the dory, and we lay to our roding line and second anchor, so we might not drift miles to loo'ard while waiting for the vessel to pick us up. We could see the vessel—to her hull, when to the top of a sea we rose together; but nothing of her at all when into the hollows we fell together.

She had picked up all but the dory next to wind'ard of us. We would be the last, but before long now she would be to us. "When you drop Simon and me, go to the other end of the line and work back. Pick Simon and me up last of all," Hugh Glynn had said to Saul, and I remember how Saul, standing to the wheel, looked down over the taffrail and said, "Simon and you last of all," and nodded his head as our dory fell away in the vessel's wake.

Tide and sea were such that there was no use trying to row against it, or we would not have waited at all; but we waited, and as we waited the wind, which had been southerly, went into the east and snow fell; but for not more than a half-hour, when it cleared. We stood up and looked about us. There was no vessel or other dory in sight.

We said no word to each other of it, but the while we waited further, all the while with a wind'ard eye to the bad little seas, we talked.

"Did you ever think of dying, Simon?" Hugh Glynn said after a time.

"Can a man follow the winter trawling long and not think of it, at times?" I answered.

"And have you fear of it, Simon?"

"I know I have no love for it," I said. "But do you ever think of it, you?"

"I do—often. With the double tides working to draw me to it, it would be queer enough if now and again I did not think of it."

"And have you fear of it?"

"Of not going properly—I have, Simon." And after a little: "And I've often thought it a pity for a man to go and nothing come of his going. Would you like the sea for a grave, Simon?"

"I would not," I answered.

"Nor me, Simon. A grand, clean grave, the ocean, and there was a time I thought I would; but not now. The green grave ashore, with your own beside you—a man will feel less lonesome, or so I've often thought, Simon.

"I've often thought so," he went on, his eyes now on watch for the bad seas and again looking wistful-like at me. "I'd like to lie where my wife and boy lie, she to one side and the lad to the other, and rise with them on Judgment Day. I've a notion, Simon, that with them to bear me up I'd stand afore the Lord with greater courage. For if what some think is true—that it's those we've loved in this world will have the right to plead for us in the next—then, Simon, there will be two to plead for me as few can plead."

He stood up and looked around. "It is a bad sea now, but worse later, and a strong breeze brewing, Simon," and he drew from an inside pocket of his woollen shirt a small leather notebook. He held it up for me to see, with the slim little pencil held by little loops along the edges.

" 'Twas hers. I've a pocket put in every woollen shirt I wear to sea so 'twill be close to me. There's things in it she wrote of our little boy. And I'm writing here something I'd like you to be witness to, Simon."

He wrote a few lines. "There, Simon. I've thought often this trip how 'tis hard on John Snow at his age to have to take to fishing again. If I hadn't lost Arthur, he wouldn't have to. I'm willing my vessel to John Snow. Will you witness it, Simon?"

I signed my name below his; and he set the book back in his inside pocket.

"And you think our time is come, skipper?" I tried to speak quietly, too.

"I won't say that, Simon, but foolish not to make ready for it."

I looked about when we rose to the next sea for the vessel. But no vessel. I thought it hard. "Had you no distrust of Saul Haverick this morning?" I asked him.

"I had. And last night, too, Simon."

"And you trusted him?"

"A hard world if we didn't trust people, Simon. I thought it over again this morning and was ashamed, Simon, to think it in me to distrust a shipmate. I wouldn't believed it of any man ever I sailed with. But no use to fool ourselves longer. Make ready. Over with the fish, over with the trawls, over with everything but thirty or forty fathom of that roding line, and the sail, and one anchor, and the two buoys."

It was hard to have to throw back in the sea the fine fish that we'd taken hours to set and haul for; hard, too, to heave over the stout gear that had taken so many long hours to rig. But there was no more time to waste—over they went. And we took the two buoys—light-made but sound and tight half-barrels they were—and we lashed them to the risings of the dory.

"And now the sail to her, Simon."

We put the sail to her.

"And stand by to cut clear our anchorage!" I stood by with my bait-knife; and when he called out, I cut, and away we went racing before wind and tide; me in the waist, on the buoy lashed to the wind'ard side to hold her down, and he on the wind'ard gunnel, too, but aft, with an oar in one hand and the sheet of the sail in the other.

"And where now?" I asked, when the wind would let me.

"The lee of Sable Island lies ahead."

The full gale was on us now—a living gale; and before the gale

Roding line: anchor rope.

the sea ran higher than ever, and before the high seas the flying dory. Mountains of slate-blue water rolled down into valleys, and the valleys rolled up into mountains again, and all shifting so fast that no man might point a finger and say, "Here's one: there's one!"—quick and wild as that they were.

From one great hill we would tumble only to fall into the next great hollow; and never did she make one of her wild plunges but the spume blew wide and high over her, and never did she check herself for even the quickest of breaths, striving the while to breast up the side of a mountain of water, but the sea would roll over her, and I'd say to myself once again: "Now at last we're gone!"

We tumbled into the hollows and a roaring wind would drive a boiling foam, white as milk, atop of us; we climbed up the hills and the roaring wind would drive the solid green water atop of us. Wind, sea, and milk-white foam between them—they seemed all of a mind to smother us. These things I saw in jumps like. Lashed to the wind'ard buoy I was by a length of roding line, to my knees in water the better part of the time, and busy enough with the bailing. There was no steady looking to wind'ard, such was the weight of the bullets of water which the wild wind drove off the sea crests; but a flying glance now and again kept me in the run of it.

I would have wished to be able to do my share of the steering, but only Hugh Glynn could properly steer that dory that day. The dory would have sunk a hundred times only for the buoys in the waist; but she would have capsized more times than that again only for the hand of him in the stern. Steady he sat, a man of marble, his jaw like a cliff rising above the collar of his woollen shirt, his two eyes like two lights glowing out from under his cap brim.

And yet for all of him I couldn't see how we could live through it. Once we were so terribly beset that, "We'll be lost carrying sail like this, Hugh Glynn!" I called back to him.

And he answered: "I never could see any difference myself, Simon, between being lost carrying sail and being lost hove to."

After that I said no more.

And so, to what must have been the wonder of wind and sea that day, Hugh Glynn drove the little dory into the night and the lee of Sable Island.

V

We took in our sail and let go our anchor. Hugh Glynn looked long above and about him. "A clear night coming, Simon; and cold, with the wind backing into the no'west. We'll lay here, for big vessels will be running for this same lee to-night, and maybe a chance for us to be picked up with the daylight. Did I do well this day by you, Simon?"

"I'd be a lost man hours back but for you," I said, and was for saying more in praise of him, but he held up his hand.

"So you don't hold me a reckless, desperate sail-carrier, Simon, never mind the rest." His eyes were shining. "But your voice is weary, Simon, and you're hungry, too, I know."

I was hungry and worn—terribly worn—after the day, and so told him.

"Then lie down and 'twill rest you, and for a time make you forget the hunger. And while you're lying down, Simon, I'll stand watch."

And I made ready to lie down, when I thought of his sweater I was wearing. I unbuttoned my oil-jacket to get at it. "It's colder already, skipper, and you will be needing it."

"No, it is you will be needing it, Simon. Being on my feet, d'y' see, I can thrash around and keep warm."

"But will you call me and take it if it grows too cold, skipper?"

"I'll call you when I want it—lie down now."

"A wonderful calm night, full as quiet as last night, skipper," I said, "only no harm in this night—no gale before us on the morrow."

"No, Simon," he said—"naught but peace before us. But lie down, you, boy."

"And you'll call me, skipper," I said, "when my watch comes?"

"I'll call you when I've stood my full watch. Lie down now."

I lay down, meaning to keep awake. But I feel asleep.

I thought I felt a hand wrapping something around me in the night, and I made to sit up, but a voice said, "Lie down, boy," and I lay down and went to sleep again.

When I awoke it was to the voices of strange men, and one was saying: "He will be all right now."

I sat up. I was still in the dory, and saw men standing over me; and other men were looking down from a vessel's side. Ice was thick on the rail of the vessel.

It was piercing cold and I was weak with the fire of the pains running through my veins, but remembering, I tried to stand up. "H-sh-h, boy!" they said, "you are all right," and would have held me down while they rubbed my feet and hands.

I stood up among them, nevertheless, and looked for Hugh Glynn. He was on the after thwart, his arms folded over the gunnel and his forehead resting on his arms. His woolen shirt was gone from him. I looked back and in the waist of the dory I saw it, where they had taken it off me; and the sail of the boat he had wrapped around me, too; and his woollen mitts.

I lifted his head to see his face. If ever a man smiled, 'twas he was smiling as I looked. "Skipper! O skipper!" I called out; and again: "O skipper!"

One of the men who had been rubbing my feet touched my shoulder. "Come away, boy; the voice o' God called him afore you."

And so Hugh Glynn came to his green grave ashore; and so I came home to marry Mary Snow; and in the end to father the children which may or may not grow great as he predicted. But great in the eyes of the world they could become, greater than all living men, it might be, and yet fall far short in our eyes of the

stature of the man who thought that 'twas better for one to live than for two to die, and that one not to be himself.

Desperate he was and lawbreaking, for law is law, whosoever it bears hard upon; but the heart was warm within him. And if my children have naught else, and it is for their mother and me to say, the heart to feel for others they shall have; and having that, the rest may follow or not, as it will; which would be Hugh Glynn's way of it, too, I think.

AS A DOG SHOULD

By

CHARLES ALEXANDER

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While the word *wolf* is almost synonymous for soulless savagery, it is from the wolf-stock that the dog has been bred. In Jack London's *The Call of the Wild,* the dog Buck answered the lure of the wilderness by leaping back over the centuries and becoming a wolf. Ump, too, hears the call of the wild; but he goes back in spirit only to the time when his ancestors achieved the strange devotion to man that holds their breed forever in a willing and ennobling bondage.

As a Dog Should was included in the O. Henry Prize selections for the year in which it was published.

CHARLES ALEXANDER was born in South Dakota. He is engaged in writing, and lives in Oregon, less than a hundred miles from the Umpqua Mountains, which figure in the story printed here.

Mr. Alexander has written *Bobbie, a Great Collie* and three full-length books. His short stories, which have appeared in many magazines, number more than fifty.

AS A DOG SHOULD

By Charles Alexander

A HUGE car, silent, implacable, and shiny as a shell-backed monster, rolled out of its lair and slowed to a stop on the paved track crossing the lawn. At its appearance Umpqua, a little so-called dog, of a type and size to back into a tomato can and defy the world, leaped from a crêpe-de-chine lap and streaked across the grass. He stood beside the car and, head tipped a little sidewise, expectantly eyed the driver.

The Doctor got out, produced a carrying apparatus, and began clamping it on to the running board. As he worked he said to the dog: "Don't worry, Ump, we're not going anywhere to-day. Besides, if we were, you couldn't go."

The voices of girls called from the lawn. The summer afternoon was warm. A little breeze loafed among the roses, occasionally spilling a few petals on the ground. Alene, the younger daughter, with long white hands and sure young eyes, came and watched the Doctor, sitting with a cushion between her shoulders and the trunk of a mountain ash that served its lonely sentence beside the drive.

Ump would not be inveigled into her lap and her long hands. Perfectly still he stood, only his bright brown eyes moving as he watched the Doctor fussing about the car. Many times Ump's eyes had followed the Doctor and the shiny monster down the drive and out—upon the strange white road.

Where the road led Ump did not dream. He was incapable of dreaming its possible destination, since he never had followed it, or any road, to any destination. Nothing had he followed but the walks and paths among the lawns and gardens that led, all of them, back upon themselves, back to the high doorways of the bulky white

house. They were adventures in themselves, these paths, especially at sunrise, when the grass glistened and fat slugs threaded through it. Ump had a habit of stealthily exploring the paths each morning.

But the road was something else. He had a habit, too, of following the shiny car, when he could escape fondling hands and laps, as far as the pillars of the gate. Here he could see the road; could see a distance along it; could see, if he stood up with one paw on the pillar, a vast sea of yellow fields, and beyond—in the infinite beyond—blue hills heaped like breastworks around the valley.

He could not even dream of these, either, since he did not know what hills were. No man's dog was Ump. He was a fondling, bred and reared to be cuddled in crêpe-de-chine laps and petted by idle white hands. Alene's sure eyes, and the Doctor's wise ones, could see no hint of the shaggy monster that stirred in him as he stood at the gate and glimpsed the hills while the great car crept out on the road, bearing the master—Ump's man-master—away. Always, when the gate closed, he slowly returned to his duties as toy and fondling.

This day the gate did not open. While Ump watched, the Doctor lugged strange cases, packages, canvas paraphernalia, out of the house and to the car. He packed and repacked them, carefully disregarding all the advice that Alene generously tendered him. Last of all was a strapped bundle of books. Alene laughed about them and told Ump how funny it was.

Then the Doctor squeezed himself into what was left of the driver's seat. The car purred a little. Ump turned toward the gate. The car moved. But it moved backward, and vanished inside the garage. In the middle of the drive Ump stood, his ears pointed, puzzling at this suspicious and unheard-of manœuvre. He had been awaiting his glimpse of the hills, but the gate had not opened. He was disappointed, and suddenly very determined. He ran from Alene, hid behind the mountain ash, and there spent the night. Nor did the magic of the night soothe him.

"Ump! Ump, you rascal. Where are you? Ump*qua,* come here."

It was early morning; the car stood outside the gate, eagerly humming, and its four passengers were impatient for the start. There were the Doctor and Alene, and his first daughter, an empty-handed wife, and Ray, her empty-headed husband. All looked back at the house and grounds. From the gate Thomas anxiously looked at them.

"Where's Ump? Have you seen Ump?" barked the Doctor.

"No, sir, but I'll look."

"Well, look later. We're going."

"Tell Ump good-bye for me, Thomas," sang Alene as the gears shifted. "Don't forget his milk. At eight and at five."

Thomas closed the gate. The car started. Ump got up from the dust as the car passed from over him. He trotted close beside it, hopped on the running board, crouched against the fender. Then they were whizzing down the white road, the out road, the Umpqua valley was sliding behind them, the Umpqua range approaching, the ancient wind singing to them its ancient song. And the Doctor raised his own voice:

Yonder the Far Horizon lies,
and there, by night and day,
The old ships sail to port again,
the young ships sail away;
And come I may, but go I must,
and if men ask you why,
You may place the blame on the
stars and the sun
And the white road, and the sky.

The Doctor did not know that Umpqua, too, braced on the running board, heard the song of the wind; heard and felt more than he or any of them heard or felt. Such strange, such subtle, things, indeed, the wind from off the mountains poured into Umpqua's ears and nose that he forgot after a while his fear of his footing on the lurching board, and unconsciously crept forward. He crawled

past the fore door, along the hood, put his feet on the lamp, and stretched forward.

He could not stretch far enough. He thrust his nose well out into the wind. It tore at him, drove into his nostrils—and he stretched farther, climbed upon the lamp itself, until half his body was ahead of the car. The wind from the mountains blew through him, blew into his blood. He was drunk on the words and music of it, its shouted knowledge and whispered secrets, that were like patches of flame swirling and eddying in the driving substance. The air was green, almost palpable, seemingly alive. Ump was like a weather vane pointed into it.

The people in the car shouted. The Doctor even swore, damning the little fyste that had stowed away on his car. Alene shrieked to Ump to come back, lest he be killed. And none of them noticed the rut until the front wheels struck it and the car plunged and lurched.

"Stop, Daddy," cried Alene.

"Stop yourself," snorted the Doctor. "Let the little devil go back home. I've taught him to stay home. He knows better than to sneak out and get on this car. We can't look out for him in the mountains. Some jackrabbit would eat him. Let him be; he'll go home."

And Ump, picking himself up from the dust, saw a rapidly vanishing car and a trail of hieroglyphics in the road that the tires had left.

Next morning, as camp was breaking in the foothills, he limped along those hieroglyphics, a little white mite crawling between two walls of giant trees. And Alene, now a slim khaki figure, ran and gathered him up.

She said nothing to the Doctor. He could not now say anything. The fyste had won his right to ride.

Ump was changed. He allowed Alene to gather him into her lap, and he was too exhausted to nibble the sandwich she saved for him. But when the car started up the dank road, into the black-

Fyste: a puff-ball.

forested Umpquas, he stirred. He got to the side of the seat, hung his head over, pointed it into the wind.

They stopped at a spring, and Ump, too, must drink. He declined to reënter the car. Alene pleaded. The Doctor got out and drove him around and around. He retreated under the car.

"Let the little fool walk," growled the Doctor. "He'll be nothing but a nuisance to us on the whole trip. If he gets back home alive, it will be a miracle."

When he slammed the door, Ump jumped aboard, climbed along the fender, and took up his perch on the headlight.

"He's crazy," said the Doctor. "Crazy on air."

"I don't see why a civilized dog should insist on standing out there with his nose pointed, as if he were on the trail of a cougar or something," said Alene.

The Doctor was indignant. "Civilized? Ump isn't civilized; he never was civilized; he was just sick, and now he's getting well." Which was as close to profundity as the Doctor had come in all his studious life.

Thus Ump finished the journey, while the mountains closed in like a presence, so that even the people in the car fell silent. He clung upon the lamp, his eyes wet and blinded, his nose stretched forward as far as he could stretch it. He did not shift position. He never looked aside. All his tiny being was listening, sensing, feeling those thousand ancient voices in the ancient wind. And they became more than sudden sibilant voices. They became forms and phantoms, glimpses of vague forms and shaggy phantoms that seemed, to Ump, to come streaming down the wind to him.

At noon they made permanent camp on a little flat high in the Umpquas. When Ump saw this he climbed down from the lamp. He did not run to them in play, though he was conscious in a new way of his duty to them. He was not the Ump of old. He was no longer sick. This was his own country; he was a wanderer returned to his health. Whatever strange people lived here were his people. Yet, paradoxically, they were enemy people. He knew

that, knew it without question, knew it indubitably, for the wind told him.

While the Doctor and Ray pitched the tents, Ump stealthily crawled across the glade to the great bleached snag stretched from the forest on one hand to the roaring little river on the other. It was a huge snag, six feet high as it lay, and two hundred feet long, fire-smitten out of the father forest of the present forest. Ump managed, with the aid of a leaning limb, to climb upon it. Thence he made his way toward its fortress-like butt, at the river.

Slowly, cautiously, he advanced. He was in the midst of a thousand mighty dangers. Near him the Doctor puffed and shouted as he swung a hand axe, but Ump was silent and wide-eyed. He knew what he knew, which was what the air and the feel of it told him; he knew that this was no time for careless shouting. Along the log seas of tree fern swarmed, as high as the log's white top, so that it formed a wooden road through the surface of the fern brake. Down this road crept Ump. At the butt the roots stuck up like a wall; Ump climbed among them, stuck his nose out, looked, and listened.

The forest was still. The great firs, like aged prophets, crooned a little, high above. In the river was a group of subdued voices, as though a clan of hunters, heads together, muttered over their plans. Beneath the great firs, cavern after gloomy cavern opened out. And as Ump watched he saw the Wilderness. He saw one of his own people—his enemy friends. He froze, a little white speck up among the roots, scarcely drawing breath.

It was a smooth tawny body. Only for an instant did he see it. It came out of the gloom, lightly leaped over a brown log, disappeared in the gloom. It was only a shadow of tawniness, a hint of a sinuous body. But the clean white fangs glinted in the twilight forest. And from them a limp body hung, a body that would have made many creatures the size of Ump. And Ump knew: the white fangs, the lifeless body hanging from them—these were the Wilderness. Somewhere he had known it all before—when and how he did not know.

The paunchy Doctor was industriously sharpening a peg when Ump flung upon him. The little dog seemed crazed. He danced around the man, yelped, tried to tell him of the great fanged enemy in the forest. He scrambled back on the snag, ran its length, took a long look into the gloom where the beast had appeared, and ran back.

The Doctor's fat hand swept Ump aside. "Get away," he growled. "Go lie down. Did you see a mouse?"

Ump, humiliated, slunk off, the stub of his tail trying to sneak between his legs. Alene reached to pick him up. He growled a quavery, fierce little growl that bade her mind her own affairs. He found a shoe box and crawled into it, turning about so as to fasten his eyes on the huge Doctor.

Ump was loyal. Here, in the presence of enemies, he was beginning to find his own relationship to his master. For the first time in his life he felt an overwhelming love for the master. From every hand came squalls and cries that he alone understood. The intense reality of them (to him) made him wild to rush and tell the whole thing to the Doctor.

He felt important. He and he alone understood the cries and squalls, heard the overtone of hidden life, felt the full meaning of that single picture he had seen of tawny body and white fangs. He wished to rush up to his master and tell him these important things.

Yet that was wholly ridiculous, as his one attempt showed. Back at the house in the valley Ump had had no duties and no cause to serve his master; wherefore he had no cause to love him. He had amused himself with superficial cunning, stealing a pound of butter when the refrigerator door was open, or killing a barred-rock hen occasionally and suffering a gentle beating in consequence. And he had amused the Doctor's daughters in about the same way that dolls had once amused them.

Here in the forest he suddenly discovered meaning and purpose in his own existence. It was unnamable, indefinable, but none the less real. Looking at the man, Ump knew that he loved him. He forgot that he was a pitiful little house dog, felt instead that he was

Dog, man's dog, standing beside his majestic master and facing a world where fangs gleamed in the darkness and huge, vague bodies crept and leaped.

He did not sulk for long. The voices called and challenged him. Crawling across the clearing, he spent an hour venturing, a step at a time, into the forest. He came to the base of a fir, and discovered a world of trembling sensations in sneaking around it. He examined everything with his eyes; there were a thousand things to see, and each, to Ump, was crammed with baffling memories and with wisps and shreds and suggestions of memories that had never before come alive within his brain. Suddenly, from a clump of vine maple, a horrible torrent of maledictions poured on him—coarse curses, jeering screams, guttural threats. Down the tree trunk a brown body flashed, leaped to a log, stared at Ump. That was a yellow-bellied pine squirrel, and far above another squirrel purred and chirruped. The camp-robber jay that had cursed him went off into another thicket, mockery and ridicule floating back.

Ump, eyes fastened on the round eyes of the squirrel, boiled with excitement. The shadowy, shaggy things were materializing. He stood frozen, glaring at the yellow-belly; the latter glared down from the log, jerked his body nervously, sat up and shrieked a defy at Ump. The squirrel's teeth were bowed and curved like little sabres. His blue-brown fur was mysteriously soft.

A step at a time, eyes glued on the squirrel, Ump crept over the brown moss. He came to the log. The yellow-belly stooped, barked at him, jerked right and left to startle Ump, and worked himself into a fury. And thereat Ump made his mistake.

He backed off.

Like a flash the blustering squirrel leaped, being careful to land well away from Ump. But Ump, at the leap, was suffocated with terror. He turned and ran.

Back at camp the four busy people were treated to a rare sight. Ump, a white, frightened ball, fled for the tent.

One jump behind him, coming in great, sailing bounds, was a fat yellow-belly. At every jump toward Ump's heels the yellow-

belly barked his righteous indignation. At every bark Ump fled the faster. And when he shot inside the tent, burying himself in a pile of blankets, the squirrel stood up and hurled his choicest abuse at the white tent.

The Doctor roared until he was weak. He sat down and roared; then he lay in the fern and continued to roar. And finally, propped on an elbow, he called Ump forth and mercilessly kidded him:

"You're some dog, now, aren't you, Ump? A regular he-dog. By golly, you'll show these fuzzy monsters of the forest what it is to meet up with a real man's-dog. But you want to be careful. This is a wild and dangerous neck o' woods. A mouse might catch you out alone and bite your ears off."

Ray and Mrs. Ray laughed. Alene comforted her pet.

"Don't you mind them, Ump. You're all right, and you and I know it, don't we? Besides, he *can* kill things. I've seen him."

"I never saw him kill anything but warm milk. What did he kill?"

"Well, it was only a beetle. But it was a big beetle, shiny and horrible. Ump boxed it with his paws. Then he bit it."

"Good for Ump," cried the Doctor. "I'll buy him a medal."

"Besides, that was an awfully big squirrel. He looked mad, too. And he had the—the drop on Ump."

"I hope to tell you!" chuckled the Doctor. "That is, he almost—and would have, if Ump hadn't broken the canine speed limit. I never saw him move like that before, even at mealtime. You're all right, Ump. Any dog that can project himself through space like that deserves a pension."

Ump looked his reproach, escaped from Alene, and hid within the tent. He had wanted to defend his master, to fill his place as a dog should. And at the first danger he had fled.

In the tent he stayed until nightfall. Then he nosed his way out at the back of the tent, and around the edge of the shadows that the fire before the tent threw into the darkness. Around the fire the campers sat on canvas stools, the Doctor with a book in his hands, Ray meditating on the trout possibilities of the river.

"I scouted down it a ways," he said. "Fine water. There's a deep place under a bluff, just below the end of that dead snag, where there are some big beauties. But you can't get 'em out of that water. It's clear as glass."

"Oh, yes, you can if you do it right," drawled the Doctor. "Sneak up on 'em and tease 'em to the top."

"You'll have to show me," said Ray. "I'm not going to waste time there. But I saw some monsters in that pool."

The Doctor smiled, and made his own plans. He read some ancient knowledge out of his book, felt very well satisfied, and led the retreat to the cots.

Yet, perhaps, the wisdom that he found in his printed pages did not compare with what Ump felt abroad in the wilderness night. He had climbed the snag again and crouched hidden among its roots, staring into the black forest. Long into the night he lay motionless, teeming inwardly with thrill after thrill.

Behind him the fern lay in billows like a silver sea. The air brought to his nose a hundred wild tales. From everywhere came voices, voice upon voice, yet strangely combining in one continuous undertone. In the wall of the night before him were eyes—flashing green or burning red like coals, and always in pairs, always two by two. The whole night was eyes. The vast blue-black sky blinked with them. And there, too, they seemed always to blink in pairs.

Under the forest were occasional rustlings, when red eyes swirled together, and at times a squall came from afar. Somewhere arose the kittenish *meow* of a lost fawn; later the bleat and snort of a doe came, and angry snarls.

Silvery wings floated down; above Ump a wood bat had caught a hawk moth, clipping his wings off in flight. The little lapdog's blood pounded. He felt near to bursting. Here, around him, in shadowy shapes, were the living things whose calls had come to him even in the valley. He was facing them, the things he should, as a loyal dog, face for his sleeping master.

Before the tent the fire died down to embers; around Ump life in

all its olden meanings held forth. He heard a scratching on the log. Far down it a lithe shape climbed over, and he saw, for an instant, glowing red coals, two by two. Aslant the high sky great wings fluttered, and a snapping of beaks came out of the air.

This was the place, on guard before his master's camp. Overwhelmed by the glory of it, Ump leaped from the snag.

It was a long leap; he landed on his nose. But he ran, tripping in the fern, until he stood in the forest. And he barked wildly, defiantly, at all the threatening death, all the life, all the shadows and red eyes and glistening fangs.

Then, his challenge unanswered, he raced into the tent, barking a summons to his master. He was no longer a fyste; he had forgotten himself and his place.

He was a dog, a proper dog, huge and shaggy, royally great as the dogs his blood had come down from had been great and loyal. He was telling his master of the enemies without, bidding him come and kill.

The Doctor saw it otherwise. He grunted himself awake, got the vociferous Ump by the neck, and punctuated his remarks with sharp whacks of a boot. And then he got a tin bucket, advised Ump for good and all to hold his peace, and slapped the bucket over him.

The Doctor slept no more, not because of Ump's warning, but because dawn was at hand, and he had certain gleeful plans for showing his son-in-law how to extract wary old trout from the deep pool, all before breakfast.

When the others were again asleep, he carefully got into his khaki, jointed up his split bamboo, and ducked outside. He did not hear the tin bucket suddenly overturn as he went through the wet fern for the river. He would not have appreciated it had he known that Ump was out to protect his master in the forest.

He followed the snag, turned down the river a quarter of a mile, and came to the bluff. It towered above the important little stream, only a ledge twenty feet above the water permitting passage. To cast from this ledge took all of the Doctor's skill. But his wrist

had lost none of its cunning. His fly flecked the pool for an instant, skipped away, touched the wimples again. A brown flash split the water. The Doctor whipped a wimple farther upstream; the great trout followed.

He struck. The Doctor held his pole rigid. He forgot to play the trout. The silk line snapped.

Behind him on the ledge was an ominous rattle of unsheathed claws on rock. He wheeled, his pole held upright.

And there was the Unknown, the thing that does not happen, the thing undreamed. He was face to face with the wilderness, up against what men were up against ere ever they placed word upon paper.

A cougar was flattened on the ledge between him and camp. It was twenty feet away—one leap. Nine feet it stretched to the tip of its heavy tail, and that tail whipped from side to side against the rocks. Its shoulders bulged above its sinuous body.

Almost soundlessly it snarled, its mouth vast, its little ears flattened on its tigerish head. The Doctor stared. As a matter of knowledge, he knew that cougars seldom attack. Yet as he stared it crept forward, and what he read in its yellow-notch eyes any man, however unlearned, would have read and known for truth.

He tried to think. He could not go around the cougar. He dared not turn and run. He took a tentative step backward.

That, too, was dangerous. The cougar slid forward, covered half the space between them. He knew it was fatal to step backward, but he did not know why—did not know that a den in the ledge behind him held three striped kittens, did not know that the cougar's heavy dugs ached with motherhood. His move backward brought him closer to her young, and made her rage flame higher.

He thought of weapons. The cougar slowly crawled. He saw the slender pole in his hand. Carefully he lowered it, touched the cat's nose, whipped her nose gently.

That annoyed her. She struck at the pole with a paw that could have broken a stallion's back. His own popping eyes riveted on hers, the Doctor continued to whip her.

But that was only a makeshift. It distracted her for a moment, but it teased her, fanned her rage. Her tail lashed. She would leap. Something must happen—*something*.

The man and the cougar heard it at the same instant. The cat half whirled, presenting a mouthful of white, saberlike teeth.

It was Ump. He came flying like a ball of white fluff. He did not hesitate. He forgot that he was a mite of a dog, dreamed again that he was great and shaggy, hip-high on his master, armed with terrible jaws to lock on a tiger's throat, and strength to hurl a tiger down.

He had been made by man into a lapling, a pitiful plaything for sorry women; yet his master was in danger, and Ump was Dog.

Snarling a terrible little snarl, he flew into the cougar's face. There was a sudden storm of tawny arms and legs. During that storm the fat Doctor ran. Even Ump, running from an indignant squirrel, had not run as the Doctor ran.

That day the party drove out of the hills, down a dank lane between two walls of crooning forest. The wind sang all the old songs. The car struck all the ruts. The Doctor's eyes wandered again and again to a front lamp that was covered with prints of tiny muddy feet.

BLUE MURDER

By

WILBUR DANIEL STEELE

From THE MAN WHO SAW THROUGH HEAVEN, *published by Harper and Brothers. By permission of the author.*

In old times, strangely enough, the color *blue* was often applied to plagues and other hurtful things, and so the term *blue murder* came long ago to denote the most horrid kind of murder. Spelled with a capital B and a capital M in Mr. Steele's story, *Blue Murdèr* is the name of a horse. When you read the story, you can judge whether the term without the capitals is applicable to what happens.

WILBUR DANIEL STEELE stands second to no one as a short story writer, and it is an appropriate coincidence that he and O. Henry should have been born in the same place—Greensboro, North Carolina.

Mr. Steele graduated from the University of Denver, and for the next three years studied in the music and fine art schools of Boston, Paris, and New York. He has traveled a good deal, and now lives in Nantucket, Massachusetts.

No other contemporary writer has written more short stories of the uniformly high quality that marks his work. He is represented every year in the O. Henry Memorial Prize selections; his O. Henry prizes number two firsts, one second, and one special prize awarded him "for maintaining the highest level of merit for three years among American short story writers." He won first place in the Fourth Harper Prize Short Story Competition—the only one in which he competed.

A Steele story is sure to be original, colorful, and moving, and to be written in a style at once clear and forceful and smooth. It is not too much to say that Wilbur Daniel Steele is a greater writer of short stories than his brilliant fellow townsman was; but his work will never be so widely popular as O. Henry's because he is never satisfied—as O. Henry certainly was—to write stories that require no mental effort whatever on the part of the reader.

Several volumes of Mr. Steele's short stories have been published. They are *Land's End, Urkey Island. The Shame Dance,* and *The Man Who Saw Through Heaven.* He has written three novels: *Isles of the Blest, Taboo,* and *Meat.*

BLUE MURDER

By Wilbur Daniel Steele

AT MILL CROSSING it was already past sunset. The rays, redder for what autumn leaves were left, still laid fire along the woods crowning the stony slopes of Jim Bluedge's pastures; but then the line of the dusk began and from that level it filled the valley, washing with transparent blue the buildings scattered about the bridge, Jim's house and horse sheds and hay barns, Frank's store, and Camden's blacksmith shop.

The mill had been gone fifty years, but the falls which had turned its wheel still poured in the bottom of the valley, and when the wind came from the Footstool way their mist wet the smithy, built of the old stone on the old foundations, and their pouring drowned the clink of Camden's hammer.

Just now they couldn't drown Camden's hammer, for he wasn't in the smithy; he was at his brother's farm. Standing inside the smaller of the horse paddocks behind the sheds he drove in stakes, one after another, cut green from saplings, and so disposed as to cover the more glaring of the weaknesses in the five-foot fence. From time to time, when one was done and another to do, he rested the head of his sledge in the pocket of his leather apron (he was never without it; it was as though it had grown on him, lumpy with odds and ends of his trade—bolts and nails and rusty pliers and old horseshoes) and, standing so, he mopped the sweat from his face and looked up at the mountain.

Of the three brothers he was the dumb one. He seldom had anything to say. It was providential (folks said) that of the three enterprises at the Crossing one was a smithy; for while he was a strong, big, hungry-muscled fellow, he never would have had the shrewdness to run the store or the farm. He was better at pound-

ing—pounding while the fire reddened and the sparks flew, and thinking, and letting other people wonder what he was thinking of.

Blossom Bluedge, his brother's wife, sat perched on the top bar of the paddock gate, holding her skirts around her ankles with a trifle too much care to be quite unconscious, and watched him work. When he looked at the mountain he was looking at the mares, half a mile up the slope, grazing in a line as straight as soldiers, their heads all one way. But Blossom thought it was the receding light he was thinking of, and her own sense of misgiving returned and deepened.

"You'd have thought Jim would be home before this, wouldn't you, Cam?"

Her brother-in-law said nothing.

"Cam, look at me!"

It was nervousness, but it wasn't all nervousness—she was the prettiest girl in the valley; a small part of it was mingled coquetry and pique.

The smith began to drive another stake, swinging the hammer from high overhead, his muscles playing in fine big rhythmical convulsions under the skin of his arms and chest, covered with short blond down. Studying him cornerwise, Blossom muttered, "Well, *don't* look at me then!"

He was too dumb for any use. He was as dumb as this: when all three of the Bluedge boys were after her a year ago, Frank, the storekeeper, had brought her candy: chocolates wrapped in silver foil in a two-pound Boston box. Jim had laid before her the Bluedge farm and with it the dominance of the valley. And Camden! To the daughter of Ed Beck, the apple grower, Camden had brought *a box of apples!*—and been bewildered too, when, for all she could help it, she had had to clap a hand over her mouth and run into the house to have her giggle.

A little more than just bewildered, perhaps. Had she, or any of them, ever speculated about that? . . . He had been dumb enough before; but that was when he had started being as dumb as he was now.

Well, if he wanted to be dumb let him be dumb. Pouting her pretty lips and arching her fine brows, she forgot the unimaginative fellow and turned to the ridge again. And now, seeing the sun was quite gone, all the day's vague worries and dreads—held off by this and that—could not be held off longer. For weeks there had been so much talk, so much gossip and speculation and doubt.

"Camden," she reverted suddenly. "Tell me one thing; did you hear ——"

She stopped there. Some people were coming into the kitchen yard, dark forms in the growing darkness. Most of them lingered at the porch, sitting on the steps and lighting their pipes. The one that came out was Frank, the second of her brothers-in-law. She was glad. Frank wasn't like Camden; he would talk. Turning and taking care of her skirts, she gave him a bright and sisterly smile.

"Well, Frankie, what's the crowd?"

Far from avoiding the smile, as Camden's habit was, the storekeeper returned it with a brotherly wink for good measure. "Oh, they're tired of waiting down the road, so they come up here to see the grand arrival." He was something of a man of the world; in his calling he had acquired a fine turn for skepticism. "Don't want to miss being on hand to see what flaws they can pick in 'Jim's five hundred dollars' wuth of expiriment.' "

"Frank, ain't you the least bit worried over Jim? So late?"

"Don't see why."

"All the same, I wish either you or Cam could've gone with him."

"Don't see why. Had all the men from Perry's stable there in Twinshead to help him get the animal off the freight, and he took an extra rope and the log chain and the heavy wagon, so I guess no matter how wild and woolly the devil is he'll scarcely be climbing in over the tailboard. Besides, them Western horses ain't such a big breed; even a stallion."

"All the same—(look the other way, Frankie)." Flipping her ankles over the rail, Blossom jumped down beside him. "Listen,

Frank, tell me something; did you hear—did you hear the reason Jim's getting him cheap was because he killed a man out West there, what's-its-name, Wyoming?"

Frank was taking off his sleeve protectors, the pins in his mouth. It was Camden, at the bars, speaking in his sudden deep rough way, "Who the —— told you that?"

Frank got the pins out of his mouth. "I guess what it is, Blossie, what's mixed you up is his having that name, 'Blue Murder'."

"No sir! I got some sense and some ears. You don't go fooling me."

Frank laughed indulgently and struck her shoulder with a light hand.

"Don't you worry. Between two horsemen like Jim and Cam——"

"Don't *Cam* me! He's none of *my* horse. I told Jim once——" Breaking off, Camden hoisted his weight over the fence and stood outside, his feet spread and his hammer in both hands, an attitude that would have looked a little ludicrous had anyone been watching him.

Jim had arrived. With a clatter of hoofs and a rattle of wheels he was in the yard and come to a standstill, calling aloud as he threw the lines over the team, "Well, friends, here we are."

The curious began to edge around, closing a cautious circle. The dusk had deepened so that it was hard to make anything at any distance of Jim's "expiriment" but a blurry silhouette anchored at the wagon's tail. The farmer put an end to it, crying from his eminence, "Now, now, clear out and don't worry him; give him some peace to-night, for Lord's sake! Git!" He jumped to the ground and began to whack his arms, chilled with driving, only to have them pinioned by Blossom's without warning.

"Oh, Jim, I'm so glad you come. I been so worried; gi' me a kiss!"

The farmer reddened, eyeing the cloud of witnesses. He felt awkward and wished she could have waited. "Get along, didn't I tell you fellows?" he cried with a trace of the Bluedge temper. "Go

wait in the kitchen then; I'll tell you all about everything soon's I come in. . . . Well now—wife——"

"What's the matter?" she laughed, an eye over her shoulder. "Nobody's looking that matters. I'm sure Frank don't mind. And as for Camden——"

Camden wasn't looking at them. Still standing with his hammer two-fisted and his legs spread, his chin down and his thoughts to himself (the dumb head) he was looking at Blue Murder, staring at that other dumb head, which, raised high on the motionless column of the stallion's neck, seemed hearkening with an exile's doubt to the sounds of this new universe, tasting with wide nostrils the taint in the wind of equine strangers, and studying with eyes accustomed to far horizons these dark pastures that went up in the air.

Whatever the smith's cogitations, presently he let the hammer down and said aloud, "So you're him, eh?"

Jim had put Blossom aside, saying, "Got supper ready? I'm hungry!" Excited by the act of kissing and the sense of witnesses to it, she fussed her hair and started kitchenward as he turned to his brothers.

"Well, what do you make of him?"

"Five hundred dollars," said Frank. "However, it's your money."

Camden was shorter. "Better put him in."

"All right; let them bars down while I and Frank lead him around."

"No, thanks!" The storekeeper kept his hands in his pockets. "I just cleaned up, thanks. Cam's the boy for horses."

"He's none o' my horses!" Camden wet his lips, shook his shoulders, and scowled. "Be damned, no!" He never had the right words, and it made him mad. Hadn't he told Jim from the beginning that he washed his hands of this fool Agricultural College squandering, "and a man killer to the bargain"?

"Unless," Frank put in slyly, "unless Cam's scared."

"Oh, is Cam scared?"

"Scared?" And still, to the brothers' enduring wonder, the big

dense fellow would rise to that boyhood bait. "Scared? The —— I'm scared of any horse ever wore a shoe! Come on, I'll show you! I'll show you!"

"Well, be gentle with him, boys; he may be brittle." As Frank sauntered off around the shed he whistled the latest tune.

In the warmth and light of the kitchen he began to fool with his pretty sister-in-law, feigning princely impatience and growling with a wink at the assembled neighbors, "When do we eat?"

But she protested, "Land, I had everything ready since five, ain't I? And now if it ain't you it's them to wait for. I declare for men!"

At last one of the gossips got in a word.

"What you make of Jim's purchase, Frank?"

"Well, it's Jim's money, Darred. If *I* had the running of this farm ——" Frank began drawing up chairs noisily, leaving it at that.

Darred persisted. "Don't look to me much like an animal for women and children to handle, not yet awhile."

"Cowboys han'les 'em, pa." That was Darred's ten-year-old, big-eyed.

Blossom put the kettle back, protesting, "Leave off, or you'll get me worried to death; all your talk . . . I declare, where *are* those bad boys?" Opening the door she called into the dark, "Jim! Cam! Land's sake!"

Subdued by distance and the intervening sheds, she could hear them at their business—sounds muffled and fragmentary, soft thunder of hoofs, snorts, puffings, and the short words of men in action: "Aw, leave him be in the paddock to-night." . . . "With them mares there, you damn fool?" . . . "Damn fool, eh? Try getting him in at that door and see who's the damn fool?" . . . "Come on, don't be so scared." . . . "Scared, eh? Scared?" . . .

Why was it she always felt that curious tightening of all her powers of attention when Camden Bluedge spoke? Probably because he spoke so rarely, and then so roughly, as if his own thickness made him mad. Never mind.

"Last call for supper in the dining car, boys!" she called and closed the door. Turning back to the stove she was about to replace the tea water for the third time when, straightening up, she said, "What's that?"

No one else had heard anything. They looked at one another.

"Frank, go—go see what—go tell the boys to come in."

Frank hesitated, feeling foolish, then went to the door.

Then everyone in the room was out of his chair.

There were three sounds. The first was human and incoherent. The second was incoherent too, but it wasn't human. The third was a crash, a ripping and splintering of wood.

When they got to the paddock they found Camden crawling from beneath the wreckage of the fence where a gap was opened on the pasture side. He must have received a blow on the head, for he seemed dazed. He didn't seem to know they were there. At a precarious balance—one hand at the back of his neck—he stood facing up the hill, gaping after the diminuendo of floundering hoofs, invisible above.

So seconds passed. Again the beast gave tongue, a high wild horning note, and on the black of the stony hill to the right of it a faint shower of sparks blew like fireflies where the herding mares wheeled. It seemed to awaken the dazed smith. He opened his mouth: "*Almighty God!*" Swinging, he flung his arms toward the shed. "*There! There!*"

At last someone brought a lantern. They found Jim Bluedge lying on his back in the corner of the paddock near the door to the shed. In the lantern light, and still better in the kitchen when they had carried him in, they read the record of the thing which Camden, dumb in good earnest now, seemed unable to tell them with anything but his strange unfocused stare.

The bloody offense to the skull would have been enough to kill the man, but it was the second, full on the chest above the heart, that told the tale. On the caved grating of the ribs, already turning blue under the yellowish down, the iron shoe had left its mark; and when, laying back the rag of shirt, they saw that the toe of the

shoe was upward and the cutting calk-ends down, they knew all they wanted to know of that swift, black, crushing episode.

No outlash here of heels in fright. Here was a forefoot. An attack aimed and frontal; an onslaught reared, erect; beast turned biped; red eyes mad, to white eyes aghast. . . . And only afterward, when it was done, the blood-fright that serves the horse for conscience; the blind rush across the inclosure; the fence gone down. . . .

No one had much to say. No one seemed to know what to do.

As for Camden, he was no help. He simply stood propped on top of his logs of legs where someone had left him. From the instant when with his *"Almighty God!"* he had been brought back to memory, instead of easing its hold as the minutes passed, the event to which he remained the only living human witness seemed minute by minute to tighten its grip. It set its sweat-beaded stamp on his face, distorted his eyes, and tied his tongue. He was no good to anyone.

As for Blossom, even now—perhaps more than ever now—her dependence on physical touch was the thing that ruled her. Down on her knees beside the lamp they had set on the floor, she plucked at one of the dead man's shoes monotonously, and as it were idly, swaying the toe like an inverted pendulum from side to side. That was all. Not a word. And when Frank, the only one of the three with any sense, got her up finally and led her away to her room, she clung to *him*.

It was lucky that Frank was a man of affairs. His brother was dead, and frightfully dead, but there was to-morrow for grief. Just now there were many things to do. There were people to be gotten rid of. With short words and angry gestures he cleared them out, all but Darred and a man named White, and to these he said, "Now first thing, Jim can't stay here." He ran and got a blanket from a closet. "Give me a hand and we'll lay him in the ice house overnight. Don't sound good, but it's best, poor fellow. Cam, come along!"

He waited a moment, and as he studied the wooden fool the

blood poured back into his face. "Wake up, Cam! You great big scared stiff, you!"

Camden brought his eyes out of nothingness and looked at his brother. A twinge passed over his face, convulsing the mouth muscles. "Scared?"

"Yes, you're scared!" Frank's lip lifted, showing the tips of his teeth. "And I'll warrant you something: if you wasn't the scared stiff you was, this hellish thing wouldn't have happened, maybe. Scared! You, a blacksmith! Scared of a horse!"

"Horse!" Again that convulsion of the mouth muscles, something between irony and an idiot craft. "Why don't you go catch 'im?"

"Hush it! Don't waste time by going loony now, for God's sake. Come!"

"My advice to anybody——" Camden looked crazier than ever, knotting his brows. "My advice to anybody is to let somebody else go catch that—that——" Opening the door he faced out into the night, his head sunk between his shoulders and the fingers working at the ends of his hanging arms; and before they knew it he began to swear. They could hardly hear because his teeth were locked and his breath soft. There were all the vile words he had ever heard in his life, curses and threats and abominations, vindictive, violent, obscene. He stopped only when at a sharp word from Frank he was made aware that Blossom had come back into the room. Even then he didn't seem to comprehend her return but stood blinking at her, and at the rifle she carried, with his distraught bloodshot eyes.

Frank comprehended. Hysteria had followed the girl's blankness. Stepping between her and the body on the floor, he spoke in a persuasive, unhurried way. "What you doing with that gun, Blossie? Now, now, you don't want that gun, you know you don't."

It worked. Her rigidity lessened appreciably. Confusion gained. "Well, but—oh, Frank—well, but when we going to shoot him?"

"Yes, yes, Blossie—now, yes—only you best give me that gun;

that's the girlie." When he had got the weapon he put an arm around her shoulders. "Yes, yes, course we're going to shoot him; what you think? Don't want an animal like that running round. Now first thing in the morning——"

Hysteria returned. With its strength she resisted his leading.

"No, now! *Now!* He's gone and killed Jim! Killed my husband! I won't have him left alive another minute! I won't! *Now!* No sir, I'm going myself, I am! Frank, I am! *Cam!"*

At his name, appealed to in that queer screeching way, the man in the doorway shivered all over, wet his lips, and walked out into the dark.

"There, you see?" Frank was quick to capitalize anything. "Cam's gone to do it. Cam's gone, Blossie! . . . Here, one of you —Darred, take this gun and run give it to Camden, that's the boy."

"You sure he'll kill him, Frank? You *sure?"*

"Sure as daylight. Now you come along back to your room like a good girl and get some rest. Come, I'll go with you."

When Frank returned to the kitchen ten minutes later, Darred was back.

"Well, now, let's get at it and carry out poor Jim; he can't lay here. . . . Where's Cam gone *now,* damn him!"

"Cam? Why, he's gone and went."

"Went where?"

"Up the pasture, like you said."

"Like I——" Frank went an odd color. He walked to the door. Between the light on the sill and the beginnings of the stars where the woods crowned the mountain was all one blackness. One stillness too. He turned on Darred. "But look, you never gave him that gun, even."

"He didn't want it."

"Lord's sake; what did he say?"

"Said nothing. He'd got the log chain out of the wagon and when I caught him he was up hunting his hammer in under that wreck at the fence. Once he found it he started off up. 'Cam,' says

I, 'here's a gun; want it?' He seem not to. Just went on walking on up."

"How'd he look?"

"Look same's you seen him looking. Sick."

"The damned fool!" . . .

Poor dead Jim! Poor fool Camden! As the storekeeper went about his business and afterward when, the ice house door closed on its tragic tenant and White and Darred gone off home, he roamed the yard, driven here and there, soft-footed, waiting, hearkening—his mind was for a time not his own property but the plaything of thoughts diverse and wayward. Jim, his brother, so suddenly and so violently gone. The stallion. That beast that had kicked him to death. With anger and hate and pitiless impatience of time he thought of the morrow, when they would catch him and take their revenge with guns and clubs. Behind these speculations, covering the background of his consciousness and stringing his nerves to endless vigil, spread the wall of the mountain: silent from instant to instant but devising under its black silence (who-could-know-what instant to come) a neigh, a yell, a spark-line of iron hoofs on rolling flints, a groan. And still behind that and deeper into the borders of the unconscious, the storekeeper thought of the farm that had lost its master, the rich bottoms, the broad well-stocked pastures, the fat barns, and the comfortable house whose chimneys and gable ends fell into changing shapes of perspective against the stars as he wandered here and there. . . .

Jim gone. . . . And Camden, at any moment . . .

His face grew hot. An impulse carried him a dozen steps. "I ought to go up. Ought to take the gun and go up." But there shrewd sanity put on the brakes. "Where's the use? Couldn't find him in this dark. Besides, I oughtn't to leave Blossom here alone."

With that he went around toward the kitchen, thinking to go in. But the sight of the lantern, left burning out near the sheds, sent his ideas off on another course. At any rate it would give his muscles and nerves something to work on. Taking the lantern and entering the paddock, he fell to patching the gap into the pasture, using

broken boards from the wreck. As he worked his eyes chanced to fall on footprints in the dung-mixed earth—Camden's footprints leading away beyond the little ring of light. And beside them, taking off from the landing place of that prodigious leap, he discerned the trail of the stallion. After a moment he got down on his knees where the earth was softest, holding the lantern so that its light fell full.

He gave over his fence building. Returning to the house his gait was no longer that of the roamer; his face, caught by the periodic flare of the swinging lantern, was the face of another man. In its expression there was a kind of fright and a kind of calculating eagerness. He looked at the clock on the kitchen shelf, shook it, and read it again. He went to the telephone and fumbled at the receiver. He waited till his hand quit shaking, then removed it from the hook.

"Listen, Darred," he said, when he had got the farmer at last, "get White and whatever others you can and come over first thing it's light. Come-a-riding and bring your guns. No, Cam ain't back."

He heard Blossom calling. Outside her door he passed one hand down over his face, as he might have passed a wash rag, to wipe off what was there. Then he went in.

"What's the matter with Blossie? Can't sleep?"

"No, I can't sleep. Can't think. Can't sleep. Oh, Frankie!"

He sat down beside the bed.

"Oh, Frankie, Frankie, *hold my hand!*"

She looked almost homely, her face bleached out and her hair in a mess on the pillow. But she would get over that. And the short sleeve of the nightgown on the arm he held was edged with pretty lace.

"Got your watch here?" he asked. She gave it to him from under the pillow. This too he shook as if he couldn't believe it was going.

Pretty Blossom Beck. Here for a wonder he sat in her bedroom

and held her hand. One brother was dead and the other was on the mountain.

But little by little, as he sat and dreamed so, nightmare crept over his brain. He had to arouse and shake himself. He had to set his thoughts resolutely in other roads. . . . Perhaps there would be even the smithy. The smithy, the store, the farm. Complete. The farm, the farmhouse, the room in the farmhouse, the bed in the room, the wife in the bed. Complete beyond belief. If . . . Worth dodging horror for. If . . .

"Frank, has Cam come back?"

"Cam? Don't you worry about Cam. . . . Where's that watch again? . . ."

Far from rounding up their quarry in the early hours after dawn, it took the riders, five of them, till almost noon simply to make certain that he wasn't to be found—not in any of the pastures. Then when they discovered the hole in the fence far up in the woods beyond the crest where Blue Murder had led the mares in a break for the open country of hills and ravines to the south, they were only at the beginning.

The farmers had left their work undone at home and, as the afternoon lengthened and with it the shadows in the hollow places, they began to eye one another behind their leader's back. Yet they couldn't say it; there was something in the storekeeper's air to-day, something zealous and pitiless and fanatical, that shut them up and pulled them plodding on.

Frank did the trailing. Hopeless of getting anywhere before sundown in that unkempt wilderness of a hundred square miles of scrub, his companions slouched in their saddles and rode more and more mechanically, knee to knee, and it was he who made the casts to recover the lost trail and, dismounting to read the dust, cried back, "He's still with 'em," and with gestures of imperious excitement beckoned them on.

"Which you mean?" Darred asked him once. "Cam, or the horse?"

Frank wheeled his beast and spurred back at the speaker. It was extraordinary. "You don't know what you're talking about!" he cried, with a causelessness and a disordered vehemence which set them first staring, then speculating. "Come on, you dumbheads; don't talk—*ride!*"

By the following day, when it was being told in all the farmhouses, the story might vary in details and more and more as the tellings multiplied, but in its fundamentals it remained the same. In one thing they certainly all agreed: they used the same expression—"It was like Frank was drove. Drove in a race against something, and not sparing the whip."

They were a good six miles to the south of the fence. Already the road back home would have to be followed three parts in the dark.

Darred was the spokesman. "Frank, I'm going to call it a day."

The others reined up with him but the man ahead rode on. He didn't seem to hear. Darred lifted his voice. "Come on, call it a day, Frank. To-morrow, maybe. But you see we've run it out and they're not here."

"Wait," said Frank over his shoulder, still riding on into the pocket.

White's mount—a mare—laid back her ears, shied, and stood trembling. After a moment she whinnied.

It was as if she had whinnied for a dozen. A crashing in the woods above them to the left and the avalanche came—downstreaming, erupting, wheeling, wheeling away with volleying snorts, a dark rout.

Darred, reining his horse, began to shout, "Here they go this way, Frank!" But Frank was yelling "Up here, boys! This way, quick!"

It was the same note, excited, feverish, disordered, breaking like a child's. When they neared him they saw he was off his horse, rifle in hand, and down on his knees to study the ground where the woods began. By the time they reached his animal the impetuous

fellow had started up into the cover, his voice trailing, "Come on; spread out and come on!"

One of the farmers got down. When he saw the other three keeping their saddles he swung up again.

White spoke this time. "Be darned if I do!" He lifted a protesting hail, "Come back here, Frank! You're crazy! It's getting dark!"

It was Frank's own fault. They told him plainly to come back and he wouldn't listen.

For a while they could hear his crackle in the mounting underbrush. Then that stopped, whether he had gone too far for their ears or whether he had come to a halt to give his own ears a chance. . . . Once, off to his right, a little higher up under the low ceiling of the trees that darkened moment by moment with the rush of night, they heard another movement, another restlessness of leaves and stones. Then that was still, and everything was still.

Darred ran a sleeve over his face and swung down. "God alive, boys!"

It was the silence. All agreed there—the silence and the deepening dusk.

The first they heard was the shot. No voice. Just the one report. Then after five breaths of another silence a crashing of growth, a charge in the darkness under the withered scrub, continuous and diminishing.

They shouted, "Frank!" No answer. They called, *"Frank Bluedge!"*

Now, since they had to, they did. Keeping contact by word, and guided partly by directional memory (and mostly in the end by luck), after a time they found the storekeeper in a brake of ferns, lying across his gun.

They got him down to the open, watching behind them all the while. Only then, by the flares of successive matches, under the noses of the snorting horses, did they look for the damage done.

They remembered the stillness and the gloom; it must have been quite black in there. The attack had come from behind—equine

and pantherine at once, and planned and cunning. A deliberate lunge with a forefoot again: the shoe which had crushed the backbone between the shoulder blades was a fore shoe; that much they saw by the match flares in the red wreck.

They took no longer getting home than they had to, but it was longer than they would have wished. With Frank across his own saddle, walking their horses and with one or another ahead to pick the road (it was going to rain, and even the stars were lost), they made no more than a creeping speed.

None of them had much to say on the journey. Finding the break in the boundary fence and feeling through the last of the woods, the lights of their farms began to show in the pool of blackness below, and Darred uttered a part of what had lain in the minds of them all during the return:

"Well, that leaves Cam."

None followed it up. None cared to go any closer than he was to the real question. Something new, alien, menacing and pitiless had come into the valley of their lives with that beast they had never really seen; they felt its oppression, every one, and kept the real question back in their minds: *"Does* it leave Cam?"

It answered itself. Camden was at home when they got there.

He had come in a little before them, empty-handed. Empty-headed too. When Blossom, who had waited all day, part of the time with neighbor women who had come in and part of the time alone to the point of going mad—when she saw him coming down the pasture, his feet stumbling and his shoulders dejected, her first feeling was relief. Her first words, however, were, "Did you get him, Cam?" And all he would answer was, "Gi'me something to eat, can't you? Gi'me a few hours' sleep, can't you? Then wait!"

He looked as if he would need more than a few hours' sleep. Propped on his elbows over his plate, it seemed as though his eyes would close before his mouth would open.

His skin was scored by thorns and his shirt was in ribbons under the straps of his iron-sagged apron; but it was not by these marks that his twenty-odd hours showed: it was by his face. While yet

his eyes were open and his wits still half awake, his face surrendered. The flesh relaxed into lines of stupor, a putty-formed, putty-colored mask of sleep.

Once he let himself be aroused. This was when, to an abstracted query as to Frank's whereabouts, Blossom told him Frank had been out with four others since dawn. He heaved clear of the table and opened his eyes at her, showing the red around the rims.

He spoke with the thick tongue of a drunkard. "If anybody but me lays hand on that stallion I'll kill him. I'll wring his neck."

Then he relapsed into his stupidity, and not even the arrival of the party bringing his brother's body seemed able to shake him so far clear of it again.

At first, when they had laid Frank on the floor where on the night before they had laid Jim, he seemed hardly to comprehend.

"What's wrong with Frank?"

"Some more of Jim's 'expiriment.'"

"Frank see him? He's scared, Frank is. Look at his face there."

"He's dead, Cam."

"Dead, you say? Frank dead? Dead of fright; is that it?"

Even when, rolling the body over they showed him what was what, he appeared incapable of comprehension, of amazement, of passion, or of any added grief. He looked at them all with a kind of befuddled protest. Returning to his chair and his plate, he grumbled, "Le'me eat first, can't you? Can't you gi'me a little time to sleep?"

"Well, you wouldn't do much to-night anyway, I guess."

At White's words Blossom opened her mouth for the first time.

"No, nothing to-night, Cam. Cam! *Camden!* Say! Promise!"

"And then to-morrow, Cam, what we'll do is to get every last man in the valley, and we'll go at this right. We'll lay hand on that devil——"

Camden swallowed his mouthful of cold steak with difficulty. His obsession touched, he showed them the rims of his eyes again.

"You do and I'll wring your necks. The man that touches that

animal before I do gets his neck wrang. That's all you need to remember."

"Yes, yes—no—that is——" Poor Blossom. "Yes, Mr. White, thanks; no, Cam's not going out to-night. . . . No, Cam, nobody's going to interfere—nor nothing. Don't you worry there. . . ."

Again poor Blossom! Disaster piled too swiftly on disaster; no discipline but instinct left. Caught in fire and flood and earthquake and not knowing what to come, and no creed but "save him who can!"—by hook or crook of wile or smile. With the valley of her life emptied out, and its emptiness repeopled monstrously and pressing down black on the roof under which (now that Frank was gone to the ice house too and the farmers back home) one brother was left of three—she would tread softly, she would talk or she would be dumb, as her sidelong glimpses of the awake-asleep man's face above the table told her was the instant's need; or if he would eat, she would magic out of nothing something, anything; or if he would sleep, he could sleep, so long as he slept in that house where she could know he was sleeping.

Only one thing. If she could touch him. If she could touch and cling.

Lightning filled the windows. After a moment the thunder came avalanching down the pasture and brought up against the clapboards of the house. At this she was behind his chair. She put out a hand. She touched his shoulder. The shoulder was bare, the shirt ripped away; it was caked with sweat and with the blackening smears of scratches, but for all its exhaustion and dirt it was flesh alive—a living man to touch.

Camden blundered up. "What the ——" He started off two steps and wheeled on her. "Why don't you get off to bed for Goll sake!"

"Yes, Cam, yes—right off, yes."

"Well, *I'm* going, I can tell you. For Goll sake, I need some sleep!"

"Yes, that's right, yes, Cam, good night, Cam—only—only you promise—promise you won't go out—nowheres."

"Go *out?* Not likely I won't! Not *likely!* Get along."

It took her no time to get along then—quick and quiet as a mouse.

Camden lingered to stand at one of the windows where the lightning came again, throwing the black barns and paddocks at him from the white sweep of the pastures crowned by woods.

As it had taken her no time to go, it took Blossom no time to undress and get in bed. When Camden was on his way to his room he heard her calling, "Cam! Just a second, Cam!"

In the dark outside her door he drew one hand down over his face, wiping off whatever might be there. Then he entered.

"Yes? What?"

"Cam, set by me a minute, won't you? And Cam, oh Cam, hold my hand."

As he slouched down, his fist inclosing her fingers, thoughts awakened and ran and fastened on things. They fastened, tentatively at first, upon the farm. Jim gone. Frank gone. The smithy, the store, and the farm. The whole of Mill Crossing. The trinity. The three in one. . . .

"Tight, Cam, for pity's sake! Hold it tight!"

His eyes, falling to his fist, strayed up along the arm it held. The sleeve, rumpled near the shoulder, was trimmed with pretty lace. . . .

"Tighter, Cam!"

A box of apples. That memory hidden away in the cellar of his mind. Hidden away, clamped down in the dark, till the noxious vapors, the murderous vapors of its rotting had filled the shutup house he was. . . . A box of red apples for the apple-grower's girl . . . the girl who sniggered and ran away from him to laugh at him. . . .

And here, by the unfolding of a devious destiny, he sat in that girl's bedroom, holding that girl's hand. Jim who had got her, Frank who had wanted her, lay side by side out there in the ice house under the lightning. While he, the "dumb one"—the last to be thought of with anything but amusement and the last to be

feared—his big hot fist inclosing her imprecating hand now, and his eyes on the pretty lace at her shoulder—He jumped up with a gulp and a clatter of iron.

"What the ——" He flung her hand away. "What the ——" He swallowed. "Damn you, Blossie Beck!" He stared at her with repugnance and mortal fright. "Why, you—you—you ——"

He moderated his voice with an effort, wiping his brow, "Good night. You must excuse me, Blossie; I wasn't meaning—I mean—I hope you sleep good. *I* shall. . . . Good night!"

In his own brain was the one word, "Hurry!"

She lay and listened to his boots going along the hall and heard the closing of his door. She ought to have put out the lamp. But even with the shades drawn, the lightning around the edges of the window unnerved her; in the dark alone it would have been more than she could bear.

She lay so till she felt herself nearing exhaustion from the sustained rigidity of her limbs. Rain came and with the rain, wind. Around the eaves it neighed like wild stallions; down the chimneys it moaned like men.

Slipping out of bed and pulling on a bathrobe she ran from her room, barefooted, and along the hall to Camden's door.

"Cam!" she called. "Oh, Cam!" she begged. "Please, please!"

And now he wouldn't answer her.

New lightning, diffused through all the sky by the blown rain, ran at her along the corridor. She pushed the door open. The lamp was burning on the bureau but the room was empty and the bed untouched.

Taking the lamp she skittered down to the kitchen. No one there. . . .

"Hurry!"

Camden had reached the woods when the rain came. Lighting the lantern he had brought, he made his way on to the boundary fence. There, about a mile to the east of the path the others had taken that day, he pulled the rails down and tumbled the stones

together in a pile. Then he proceeded another hundred yards, holding the lantern high and peering through the streaming crystals of the rain.

Blue Murder was there. Neither the chain nor the sapling had given way. The lantern and, better than the lantern, a globe of lightning, showed the tethered stallion glistening and quivering, his eyes all whites at the man's approach.

"Gentle, boy; steady, boy!" Talking all the while in the way he had with horses, Camden put a hand on the taut chain and bore with a gradually progressive weight, bringing the dark head nearer. "Steady, boy; gentle there, damn you; gentle!"

Was he afraid of horses? Who was it said he was afraid of horses?

The beast's head was against the man's chest, held there by an arm thrown over the bowed neck. As he smoothed the forehead and fingered the nose with false caresses, Camden's "horse talk" ran on—the cadence one thing, the words another.

"Steady, Goll damn you; you're going to get yours. Cheer up, cheer up, the worst is yet to come. Come now! Come easy! Come along!"

When he had unloosed the chain, he felt for and found with his free hand his hammer hidden behind the tree. Throwing the lantern into the brush, where it flared for an instant before dying, he led the stallion back as far as the break he had made in the fence. Taking a turn with the chain around the animal's nose, like an improvised hackamore, he swung from the stone pile to the slippery back. A moment's shying, a sliding caracole of amazement and distrust, a crushing of knees, a lash of the chain end, and that was all there was to that. Blue Murder had been ridden before. . . .

In the smithy, chambered in the roaring of the falls and the swish and shock of the storm, Camden sang as he pumped his bellows, filling the cave beneath the rafters with red. The air was nothing, the words were mumbo-jumbo, but they swelled his chest. His

eyes, cast from time to time at his wheeling prisoner, had lost their look of helplessness and surly distraction.

Scared? He? No, no, no! Now that he wasn't any longer afraid of time, he wasn't afraid of anything on earth.

"Shy, you devil!" He wagged his exalted head. "Whicker, you hellion! Whicker all you want to, stud horse! To-morrow they're going to get you, the numb fools! To-morrow they can have you. *I* got you *to-night!*"

He was more than other men; he was enormous. Fishing an iron shoe from that inseparable apron pocket of his, he thrust it into the coals and blew and blew. He tried it and it was burning red. He tried it again and it was searing white. Taking it out on the anvil he began to beat it, swinging his hammer one-handed, gigantic. So in the crimson light, irradiating iron sparks, he was at his greatest. Pounding, pounding. A man in the dark of night with a hammer about him can do wonders! with a horseshoe about him he can cover up a sin. And if the dark of night in a paddock won't hold it, then the dark of undergrowth on a mountain side will. . . .

Pounding, pounding; thinking, thinking, in a great halo of hot stars. Feeding his hungry, his insatiable muscles.

"Steady now, you blue —— Steady, boy!"

What he did not realize in his feverish exaltation was that his muscles were not insatiable. In the thirty-odd hours past they had had a feast spread before them and they had had their fill. . . . More than their fill.

As with the scorching iron in his tongs he approached the stallion, he had to step over the nail box he had stepped over five thousand times in the routine of every day.

A box of apples, eh? Apples to snigger at, eh? But whose girl are you now? . . . Scared, eh?

His foot was heavier of a sudden than it should have been. This five thousand and first time, by the drag of the tenth of an inch, the heel caught the lip of the nail box.

He tried to save himself from stumbling. At the same time, instinctively, he held the iron flame in his tongs away.

There was a scream out of a horse's throat; a whiff of hair and burnt flesh.

There was a lash of something in the red shadows. There was another sound and another wisp of stench. . . .

When, guided by the stallion's whinnying, they found the smith next day, they saw by the cant of his head that his neck was broken, and they perceived that he too had on him the mark of a shoe. It lay up one side of his throat and the broad of a cheek. It wasn't blue this time, however—it was red. It took them some instants in the sunshine pouring through the wide door to comprehend this phenomenon. It wasn't sunk in by a blow this time; it was burned in, a brand.

Darred called them to look at the stallion, chained behind the forge.

"Almighty God!" The words sounded funny in his mouth. They sounded the funnier in that they were the same ones the blundering smith had uttered when, staring uphill from his clever wreckage of the paddock fence, he had seen the mares striking sparks from the stones where the stallion struck none. And he, of all men, a smith!

"Almighty God!" called Darred. "What you make of these here feet?"

One fore hoof was freshly pared for shoeing; the other three hoofs were as virgin as any yearling's on the plains. Blue Murder had never yet been shod. . . .

'LIJAH

By

EDGAR VALENTINE SMITH

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Judge Holmsted is brother to the many other lovable Southern "Judges" and "Colonels" of real life and fiction who have striven to keep up their hospitality on inadequate means. He is not the only one of them who has shamed men into generous conduct, but he is the only one who, out of nothing at all, has created a local habitation and a name for such a servant as 'Lijah.

'LIJAH was given a place among the O. Henry Prize stories of 1924.

EDGAR VALENTINE SMITH was born in Jemison, Alabama, and with the exception of a year's residence in Boston, he has lived all his life in the South. He attended the public schools and a private school in his native state, and graduated from Howard College in Birmingham. After spending a number of years in other work, he took up journalism, and he is now on the staff of the *Birmingham News*.

Mr. Smith has not yet written a great deal of fiction, but what he has produced has won more than its share of distinction. His *Prelude* was given first prize in the O. Henry Memorial Prize awards in 1923. He considers that his best stories are those that have appeared in *Harper's Magazine*. Among these, in addition to *Prelude* and *'Lijah,* are *Substance of Things Hoped For, Silhouette, Cameo,* and *Pardoned*. Mr. Smith's earlier fiction was chiefly humorous negro stories, which he wrote for the smaller magazines.

'LIJAH

By Edgar Valentine Smith

FORTUNE had long since ceased to smile on the last master of Holmacres. Then, suddenly, with the advent of the strangers and the coincident creation of 'Lijah, came, too, the visit of the angels.

The two strangers—being strangers—of course knew nothing of the evil days that had befallen Judge Holmsted, nor were they particularly interested, since their mission concerned not the fortunes, either good or ill, of others, but the betterment of their own. What they knew concerning the Judge and Holmacres—other than the fact that the two were intimately connected with the business which was bringing them to the place—was furnished by the aged Negro, who, with his ramshackle surrey and ancient nag, eked out a precarious existence driving occasional transients about the countryside. They had found him at the railway station in Wynnesborough, the county seat, and he had driven them along the five miles of deep-rutted road that stretched from the town to Holmacres. Being old, he was naturally garrulous.

For a long time he had sat fidgeting on the front seat of the vehicle, one ancient ear cocked rearward, listening to the unfamiliar accent of the strangers' speech. Finally, during a lull in their conversation, curiosity overpowered him and he half-faced about.

"'Scuse me, gen'lemens," he observed, ingratiatingly, "I don't mean no hahm by astin' it, but—you all is Yankees, ain't you?"

"Northerners—yes," one of them answered, smiling. "Why do you ask?"

"Yessuh. I thought so. You jus' don't talk like white folks—I *means* like *us's* white folks, Boss."

The stranger who had answered the query—the younger and less

grave-appearing of the two—smiled again. "We'd heard so much of your Southern hospitality that we thought we'd come down and see what it is like."

"Hawspitality? Well, suhs, you is comin' to de place wheah it was invented at—when you comes to see de Judge."

Then the old man—product of a bygone day and still living in the memory of its glories—described the hospitality of Holmacres as it had been and as he still saw it. It was the most fertile plantation in the country, and its owner, Judge Holmsted, by odds the richest man, the most learned lawyer, the noblest gentleman, and the most open-handed host who ever breathed. His house was the finest that had ever been built; he set the most sumptuous table in the land; niggers fought for the privilege of working for him, even accepting the humblest tasks merely for the honour of being counted among the Judge's retinue. Judge Holmsted, to sum it up, was real "quality"; not like some of the trash which had sprung up with the last generation.

Thus the strangers were prepared in a measure for the picture which greeted them a few moments later: a grove of broad-topped live oaks, with the house in the near distance, a mansion of cement-walled, slate-roofed dignity, with the huge-columned, two-storied veranda reaching in stately welcome across its entire front. And as they stepped from the conveyance and came up the cape-jasmine-bordered walk, another picture was limned before them: a man well past threescore who had risen from his chair. He had removed his broad-brimmed hat, baring a mane of iron-gray hair, and now stood, despite the dingy frock coat that he wore, a figure as imposing as one of his own Ionic columns, courteously expectant at the visitors' approach.

The young stranger introduced his companion and himself. They were from the North, as he had explained to the ancient driver, and their business was that of timberland investors. One of their agents had sent reports of hardwood acreage adjacent to the Tombigbee, and they were making a personal trip of inspection. They wished to find a place—a boarding or lodging house, per-

haps—closer to the river than the county seat. Did Judge Holmsted know of such a place? They would be in the vicinity for several days.

Masters of Holmacres, since that first one who had erected a mansion in what was at that time a wilderness, had been famed for their hospitality. Nor had they been content with the thought that the neighbouring gentry only should be the recipients of their bounty, for that first one, a little strangely perhaps for one of cavalier forbears, had caused to be carved beneath the broad fire mantel in the central hall this inscription:

"Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."

Judge Holmsted was of that breed. "I couldn't think of letting you gentlemen stay anywhere but here." He spoke with a soft slurring of r's and a dropping of final g's which any attempt to put into print serves only to distort and make grotesque. "You must do me the honour of becoming my guests during your stay."

The older stranger demurred. "Why . . . that's awfully kind of you, Judge. But we really couldn't take advantage of your hosp——"

"You'll be taking no advantage at all, sir." There was no hint of subservience in the way the Judge said "sir." It was the courteous form of address toward strangers which had been the custom during his youth. "On the contrary, you'll really be doing me a favour. I'm an old man, gentlemen"—his smile would have won them had they really been hesitant at accepting his hospitality—"a little lonely at times, and I like company. And visitors, nowadays, are rare."

The strangers accepted the invitation with suspicious readiness. They hailed the ancient driver of the surrey, who had remained waiting in the driveway and who now brought in their luggage. For just a moment Judge Holmsted seemed ever so slightly embarrassed, a slight flush mantled his cheeks. And then, without stopping to think what it might mean, he created—'Lijah.

"Be seated, gentlemen," he invited, "while I call someone to bring

in your baggage." He took a step toward the broad doorway. "'Lijah!" he called. There was no answer. He called again, more loudly, "'Lijah!" and still no one answered. Frowning, he walked to the end of the veranda, and peering about, shouted the name for the third time, with the same result as before.

He turned apologetically to his guests. "That trifling rascal," he explained, "is never about, particularly at this season of the year, when I need him." He glanced about for the driver of the surrey, but the old man had gone. "Come with me, gentlemen." Taking up their luggage, he led them within the house.

Though his welcome to the strangers had been extended in all sincerity (he had not been a Holmsted had it been otherwise) their coming brought a problem—another one—to the Judge. And, somehow, in his declining years life seemed to hold little else save problems, and all of them as yet unsolved.

Time had been when Holmacres threw its doors wide open to the countryside, for its masters had lived in the traditions handed down by its founder. Even now Judge Holmsted, daydreaming at times, permitted his thoughts to stray back to the days when servants swarmed about the place, when there were stableboys who seemed actually to get underfoot, and house boys who fairly haunted the guests, eager to be of the slightest service. The big stable had contained riding and driving horses, which were not merely to be had for the asking but were almost forced on one. There had been dogs for the fall quail shooting, and master and guests had ridden to hounds. But now . . . it seemed that there remained little of misfortune that could happen. For of the hospitality for which Holmacres had been famous there existed but a shell, a shell so fragile that it might be crushed at any moment. Pity, too, that he, the last of his race, should not maintain the heritage which was his!

Had he belonged to that modern school which placed the mere god of commercialism above neighbourliness, he might still have kept himself from actual want. But a friend in financial straits had come to him, and it was a neighbourly act to indorse a note for a large sum of money. It was a hideous fate, though, that

caused the friend to die, leaving an estate heavily encumbered, and forced the Judge to pay the indebtedness by mortgaging the home of his ancestors.

Even before this, though, the soil of Holmacres, planted for generations exclusively to cotton, had been growing less and less fruitful. Judge Holmsted had seen the yield dwindle year by year. He had divided the plantation into small farms for tenants. Then the northern exodus had begun; one by one the tenants had left, until now, with the few hired "hands" that he could secure, he was cultivating perhaps one-tenth of his tillable lands.

Still, for a time he had not experienced want. His salary as judge of the circuit—which position he had graced for thirty years—while not munificent had enabled him to make a pretence of the hospitality that had brought fame to Holmacres.

Then a new order of things came to pass. Politics was played with the precision—and the heart—of a machine. Those in control of the political destinies of the counties composing the circuit banded themselves together—that is, all of them save Judge Holmsted. Old-fashioned jurist that he was, he refused to lend himself to what he considered certain questionable pre-election machinations. Then the ultimatum went forth: he could submit or take the consequences—political oblivion. He accepted the gage, for he came not only of a hospitable but of a combative breed.

Hitherto his mere announcement that he would be a candidate for nomination at the Democratic primaries had assured his re-election. Now, for the first time in his life, he entered upon a vigorous campaign. He travelled incessantly about the various counties of his circuit, spending, legitimately, of his slender means. He made countless speeches, he met hundreds of friends and received—promises.

He returned to the practice of law in Wynnesborough, but it seemed that his methods, like himself, had become old-fashioned. Friends insisted that he retained too much conscience to compete with more modern and, in certain instances, as he maintained, less ethical procedures than met his ideals.

"The practice of law," he had said once, when the matter came up, "is an honourable profession. It was never intended that it should degenerate into a display of legal acrobatics."

Clients were few and those who came were not always of the soundest financial standing. But there was always more or less bickering and litigation between the poorer class of hill-farmers, and some of these brought their troubles to Judge Holmsted. They paid their accounts in various ways: some brought small lots of cotton, others poultry and pigs, while one, an aged bachelor recluse of uncertain temper, just before his death had willed to the Judge forty acres of land. This, people inclined to be humorous asserted, was in the way of a subtle revenge, for the Judge, suing for the old man, had lost his case, and the hill forty, as it was known, was not considered worth the tax payments.

There had been excessively poor crops. Years, too, when the cotton raised had not paid operating expenses. Twice the Judge had borrowed money—which he still owed—in advance on his crops. And the present outlook, with the late spring rains and cultivation sadly hampered, was now worse than ever.

Even his plainly dwindling income did not cause him to forsake his ideals. These, he insisted, one must cling to, even though one go down with them. Certain other changes, though, had forced themselves on him. Horses and other stock had been sold, since the plantation would not longer support them in numbers. Now all that remained were a few work mules and the Judge's own mount, Grover Cleveland. Servants were dispensed with until all of them, save one, had gone. She stayed.

Christened Alabama, she was variously called Miz' 'Bama, Sis 'Bama, and 'Bama, the form of address depending on the degree of intimacy she permitted the speaker, the Judge and those of her race whom she considered her equals using the last named. She had remained at Holmacres after all the others had left, though her wage was more often a mirage than a reality. Latterly, continued urging by certain of her friends that she leave Judge Holmsted's

service and go to the city, where her skill as a cook would return her a fabulous income, always met with scornful rebuff.

"But he ain't payin' you nothin'," the tempter would insist.

"'Sposin' he ain't?" 'Bama, hands on her ample hips, would face the speaker. "You is fergittin' somep'm, ain't you? What 'bout my social p'sition?"

Usually this ended the discussion, for 'Bama, born and reared in the atmosphere of Holmacres, was the recognized leader of her people in the vicinity. No wedding was complete without her in the rôle of general adviser and master of ceremonies, nor was any funeral fittingly held without her presence to lend due solemnity to the occasion. But sometimes argument failed to convince those who tried to tempt her. Then 'Bama would fall back on flat refusal.

"Go 'way, nigguhs!" she would command. "I wouldn't leave 'is heah plantation foh—foh a *hund'ed dolluhs a yeah!*"

So she remained steadfast at Holmacres as general house factotum for the Judge. It was 'Bama who tactfully reminded him, at those times when the larder became more depleted than usual, that supplies were needed. And it was she who, out of the merest nothing, could serve food fit for a king's banquet. It was 'Bama who attended to the laundry—carefully washing the Judge's shirts to save the frayed cuffs as much as possible—and looked after the scanty supply of household linen. She darned Judge Holmsted's socks, saw that his shiny coat was occasionally brushed, and kept him generally from being out at elbows in the matter of clothing.

Her manifold duties had brought her to the front of the house that afternoon when the Judge summoned the mythical 'Lijah. For a moment she listened in open-mouthed amazement. Then understanding of a sort came to her, as she peeped between the curtains and saw the strangers. For some reason Judge Holmsted wanted it understood that a personage who answered—or should answer—to the name of 'Lijah belonged about the place. And any undertaking that the Judge set on foot was worth seeing to its conclusion. While she lacked the Judge's creative ability, she could, at least,

embellish that which he had made. Her first attempt was in evidence that evening when she served a supper that would have tickled the palate of a gourmand.

"Judge," she remarked, taking the privilege of an old servant, "does you know, suh, 'at triflin' 'Lijah ain't got back till yit?"

Judge Holmsted choked momentarily; he seemed to experience sudden difficulty with his food, but he recovered his self-control instantly.

"He hasn't?" he demanded, sternly. "Won't he ever learn to come in on time? Tell him that I wish to speak with him the moment he gets in."

"Yessuh. I knows wheah he's at. He's down to 'at river, settin' out catfish lines."

'Bama had cast the die. Judge Holmsted's creation of 'Lijah had been the result of a sudden—and now inexplicable—impulse; probably, upon reflection, he would have made no further reference to him. But 'Bama had given entity to the myth; with a word or two she had made of it an outstanding personality: a house servant who, by implication at least, took whatsoever liberties he chose.

And suddenly the realization came to the Judge that his creation had been nothing short of inspiration. With the present state of affairs at Holmacres, numberless things were sure to happen which might cause embarrassment to one who sought to fill the rôle of dutiful host; and the lack of a perfect hospitality, in many instances, could be blamed on the erring—though mythical—'Lijah.

"He's one of the older servants about the place," the Judge explained casually to his guests. "Does pretty much as he pleases."

He followed this with a laughing remark about 'Lijah's fondness for fishing. It was almost impossible to keep a Negro and a river apart when the catfish were biting.

"I'd like very much to see 'Lijah." It was the younger stranger speaking. "I've read so many stories dealing with Southern plantation life—and especially the old family servants—that I've often wanted to see one of them. And your man, 'Lijah, seems to be typical."

"Oh, he'll be about the place—off and on," the Judge assured carelessly. "And if you're interested in types, sir, you'll probably like 'Lijah."

Thus for the moment he dismissed 'Lijah. But 'Bama, apparently, was determined not to let the errant one off so easily, for, later, as the Judge and his guests entered the high-ceilinged living room, where portraits of earlier Holmsteds gave greeting from their oval walnut frames, she came to the doorway.

"Judge," she observed, meaningly, "I don't s'pect you'll hahdly find no seegars. I seed 'Lijah sof'-footin' it round 'at sec'ta'y whilse I was dustin' 'is mawnin'."

Mechanically, Judge Holmsted's eyes sought the old rosewood secretary in one corner of the room, but before he could speak the younger stranger broke in with:

"Oh, that's all right, Judge." He was laughing heartily as he extended a cigar case. "Take one of these. So, he 'borrows' your cigars, does he? I've simply *got* to see him."

The strangers spoke of their business in the vicinity. The timber which they wished to inspect lay some miles away and, although their actual cruising of it would be done on foot, they would need some kind of conveyance to take them to their starting point. They supposed an automobile could be obtained in Wynnesborough?

Guests beneath Holmacres' roof had never been compelled to hire conveyances. It would have been unthinkable. The Judge explained that the swamp roads were in such condition that an automobile would be impracticable. He had never bought a car himself for this reason. His guests must use one of the numerous horses about the place. He would have 'Lijah hitch one of them to the buggy. It would be the very thing for their trips.

When one of them, giving as an excuse their long railroad journey, suggested retiring, Judge Holmsted, first ascertaining that 'Lijah was nowhere to be found, led them up the broad, winding stairway to their room. He lighted the kerosene lamp. Then, carelessly turning back the bed covering, he stopped in sudden horror. There was only one sheet on the bed!

He turned, his face crimsoning, to his guests. They had seen. "That trifling, worthless——" he began, and stopped. "It's 'Lijah —of course, gentlemen—as usual," he said, helplessly. "Come with me."

He led them to another room—his own—which for more than forty years no one save himself had occupied. This, he knew, would be in readiness. It always was, for he was fastidious about certain things, among them fresh bed linen. 'Bama attended to that.

"Just leave your shoes outside the door, gentlemen," he said in parting. "'Lijah will polish them."

He found 'Bama in the kitchen. Her answer to his question about the sheets brought home to him dishearteningly the scarcity of household linen.

In the library he picked up the latest issue of the Wynnesborough *Clarion,* a weekly newspaper published in the county seat, but he could not fasten his thoughts on the printed page. There were weightier things to be considered. Plainly, the visit of the strangers —should it prove of some duration—meant a still further drain on the slender resources of Holmacres. Since he had promised his guests the use of a horse, they would have to take Grover Cleveland. The Judge sighed. All of the work mules were sadly needed, but he must use one of them for his daily trips to his office. If he waited until the strangers had left every morning, though, and remained at his office till he was sure they had returned, they need never know of the subterfuge he had resorted to for their convenience.

Another matter claimed his attention: the disquieting letter—rather the letter that spelled doom—which had come that morning. The interest payment on the mortgage would be due shortly, and the letter stated brusquely that the mortgage had passed into other hands. Hereafter all payments must be met at maturity. Covetous eyes, Judge Holmsted knew, had long looked toward Holmacres. Once or twice he had succeeded in having his payments extended, but now . . . alien owners—people with no rev-

erence for its traditions—would come into possession of the place. The thought was bitter—unbearable.

Once—more than twoscore years ago—the Judge had hoped that an heir might succeed to his name and estate. But with the passing of the one who could have made this a reality, this hope, too, had died. Better so, he comforted himself now; far better that the odium for failure to live up to Holmacres' heritage be his than that it should have been shifted to a son who would have borne his name.

He mounted the stairs. Just outside the door of his guests' room he found their shoes.

And that night—and for succeeding nights—he slept in the bed that had but one sheet.

But his guests at the breakfast table next morning probably thought that his only solicitude lay in planning for their well-being. He was sorry that, owing to 'Lijah's shiftlessness—the black rascal!—he had been compelled to make such short shift for them on the previous night. He hoped they had rested well.

After breakfast they found Grover Cleveland, freshly curried and rubbed till his coat shone like satin, hitched to the buggy ready for their trip. The vehicle itself bore signs of recent washing; the harness, too, one would have said, had been freshly oiled.

"I wonder how we're going to begin talking business to a man who treats us like members of his family," the older stranger said as he climbed into the vehicle. "We'll have to use a lot of diplomacy."

"We'll just remember," the younger man reminded, "that we've come several hundred miles to secure a property at as favourable terms to ourselves as possible. And that business is business—always."

Judge Holmsted waited only long enough to see his guests off. Then he walked to one of the fields where a Negro was ploughing.

"Eph," he said, "I'll have to be using the mule for a few days."

"But, Judge, suh!" Eph stared, gaping. "Dis grass! It's plum'

ram-pant since 'em las' rains, suh. Can't you see it's jus' nachelly chokin' de cotton to death?"

The Judge could see, plainly enough. The spindling stalks of cotton were struggling weakly through mazes of Johnson and Bermuda grasses. But he saw something else, too; something that Eph, being a recent comer, could not have seen or, seeing, could not have understood: there were guests beneath Judge Holmsted's roof.

It was the first time that he had ridden a mule since he was a boy. Often then, in a spirit of mischief, he had done so. Things had changed now. Horses . . . dogs . . . servants . . . gone. Everything! Everything save the will to be a hospitable host.

At the little bank in town he was courteously but firmly refused an additional loan. The bank officials liked the Judge—and sympathized with him—but his previous loans were still outstanding. And it was doubtful—exceedingly doubtful—that his crop that year would pay the cost of raising it.

But that evening, as he sat with his guests on the broad veranda, he was solicitous only as to the result of their investigations. Were they finding the hardwood timber of good quality? And was it in sufficient quantity to justify them in purchasing and logging it? He hoped this might be the case; he was looking forward with a great deal of pleasure to welcoming them as permanent neighbours.

He proved himself to be a raconteur of rare ability and charm. The grave-faced stranger seemed fascinated by his stories as he spoke of the days when steamboats from Mobile plied the Tombigbee daily. Now there were only one or two boats weekly. But then many were the gay parties that made the round trip. There was always a Negro orchestra on board, and stately men and beautiful women, after the dining saloon had been cleared, danced the schottische and the polka until the early hours of morning. More than once, too, a steamer had been forced to pull in to the bank while two young blades went ashore and settled their hot-blooded quarrel according to the code. Judge Holmsted sighed reminiscently. Those had been wonderful days.

The air was soft with the softness of Southern nights. There came to them, as they sat there, the odour of cape jasmine and the fainter but more caressing scent of honeysuckle. A light breeze rustled the leaves of the water oaks, shimmering now by the light of the full moon in a mantle of pure silver dust.

The younger stranger lighted a cigar and leaned back in his chair, sighing restfully. "Two weeks of this," he said, "and I shouldn't want to go home. You Southern planters lead an enviable life, Judge."

"It's enchanting," his companion assented.

"We like it, sir—some of us," the Judge admitted. He spoke with a tinge of regret of former neighbours who, one by one, had been lured away by the cities. Many fine old places had been left to the care of tenants and had speedily gone to ruin. But the Holmsteds, being lovers of the land, had always lived close to it. "Maybe we are more firmly rooted in the soil than some of the others were," the Judge said.

"It seems to me, Judge," the grave-faced stranger offered, "that you have a wonderful place here for a stock farm. Aren't these native grasses—I believe you call them Johnson and Bermuda—good for grazing?"

"Excellent, sir."

"That's just what I'd do with this place if I owned it," the younger stranger broke in. He was more outspoken than his elderly companion. "I'd divide it into pastures with good fences, build up-to-date barns and pig houses, and stock it with blooded cattle and hogs. You've your grasses for spring and summer. And I understand that those river cane-brakes make fine winter grazing."

"I may try something of the kind next year," the Judge admitted. "I've been thinking for some time of venturing along that line."

Venturing! Blooded cattle and hogs! Fences and barns, when the burning question was one of bare existence! Not that he had never had dreams. Many times he had pictured his broad lands dotted with droves of sleek cattle and herds of swine, with an income assured that would again crown Holmacres with its fair name

for hospitality. But the realization of this dream would require money. . . .

It was the next morning that a mocking bird, nesting in a near-by tree, awakened the serious-faced stranger with its early song. Arising, he crept softly to the window and stood listening. And suddenly, as he looked out, he started and stared fixedly. Then a dull red flush mounted slowly to his cheeks. He withdrew from the window even more softly than he had approached it and lay down again without waking his companion.

But that morning brought consternation to Judge Holmsted. Modern plumbing had not been installed at Holmacres, and he remembered suddenly that his guests must shave. And there was one item that he had overlooked.

"I suppose, gentlemen," he remarked at the breakfast table, "that 'Lijah—you see I have to keep close check on him—brought you hot water?"

They admitted that he had not.

"He'll be the death of me yet," the Judge said, hopelessly, "if I don't wring his neck soon. He's getting more worthless every day."

The young stranger laughed. "You're more lenient with your servants, Judge, than we'd be in the North. They must attend to their duties there or they're discharged."

"But it's different with us, sir." The Judge smiled. "Take 'Lijah, for example. Been on the place all his life—going on fifty years. I couldn't get rid of him. If I were to discharge him he'd refuse to stay discharged. He'd simply come sneaking back and I'd have to feed him."

The younger man's interest in 'Lijah was more intrigued than ever. Returning with his companion earlier than usual one evening, he sought out 'Bama. He was eager, he said, to see 'Lijah. But that worthy, as usual, failed to answer even when 'Bama, standing on the kitchen porch, called his name lustily several times.

"When does he sleep?" the stranger asked. "He doesn't seem to be around the place of nights."

"Sleep? Him sleep? You neentuh worry 'bout 'at, Cap'n. All

'Lijah needs is a sof' place on de shady side of a tree when dey's somep'm needs doin' round de house. He'll 'tend to de sleepin'. Dey's just two things 'Lijah's good foh: he de sleep-lovin'es' an' de catfish-ketchin'es' nigguh you eveh seed."

"He's typical all right," the stranger laughed. "And I must see him—I've simply *got* to see him before I leave."

Judge Holmsted found himself gradually forming a sneaking fondness for his creation. Maybe it was because he was unconsciously bringing into being an ideal. For 'Lijah was just the shiftless, work-dodging, cigar-pilfering type that the Judge would have loved—the kind that would run rabbits with his bird dogs—provided the Judge could afford the dogs—or slip his pack of fox hounds out on cold autumn nights—if the Judge should ever own a pack—for surreptitious 'coon and 'possum hunting. Yes . . . that would be just like 'Lijah. Indolent, grumbling always, complaining of a mis'ry in his side; absolutely dependent, thoroughly undependable—and utterly likable. In short, he would be perfect. The Judge even caught himself at times murmuring aloud, "That trifling black rascal!"

But such things—oh, well!—they were dreams, visions that an old man was seeing.

As the strangers showed no signs of terminating their visit, 'Bama, with visions of a rapidly depleted larder, began to experience a real concern. With only the Judge and herself to care for, she could have made shift of some sort. Maybe a hint to Judge Holmsted of the real state of affairs might not prove unavailing. So she tried, very diplomatically, one evening at the supper table, to sound a warning.

"Judge, suh," she remarked, meaningly, " 'Lijah is been 'mongst de chickens ag'in."

"What of it?" Judge Holmsted smiled on his guests. 'Lijah, he explained, was probably giving a party for some of his friends. "A few chickens, more or less, don't matter, do they, 'Bama?"

"But dese is *fattenin'* chickens, suh; de onlies' ones I had left."

"You don't mind 'Lijah entertaining his friends, do you?" the talkative stranger asked.

"Not gen'ally; no, suh. But he's been gittin' entirely *too* entertainin' lately."

"Doesn't he catch enough fish for his feasts?"

"Yessuh; he ketches plenty fish. But catfish, you knows, is just a nigguh's reg'lar eatin' victuals. Dey uses de chickens kind o' foh dessert."

"You must find his parties something of a drain on your resources."

" 'Taint no pahty, suh, he's givin' 'is time. It's just a shindig—a plain shindig."

The Judge explained that a shindig was a dance.

"Dance?" The younger stranger seemed amazed. "An old man like 'Lijah?"

"Him dance?" 'Bama gave answer. "Just de thoughts of a fiddle'll send him shufflin' his feets 'cross de flo'—right now! Age ain't purified him none."

'Bama, strictly orthodox in her religious beliefs, was patently outraged by this latest of the hapless 'Lijah's escapades, for as she left the room they heard her muttering:

"An' him wid gran'chillun! I'se gwine to have him churched —I *sho* is!"

Between themselves the strangers discussed the business which had brought them to Holmacres.

"It's showing up even better than the estimate we received," the older man said one evening.

"One of the richest deposits I ever saw," the other admitted.

When they went to their room he complained of not being in the mood for sleeping. The rays of that Southern moon, he said, must have affected him. He felt restless; he'd walk round a bit.

Five minutes later he returned quietly to the house, mounted the stairs softly, undressed silently, and went to bed.

The next morning as they seated themselves at the breakfast

table, 'Bama's voice, raised in loud and indignant self-communion, was heard in the kitchen.

"Co'se, *he* don't keer! Out dere diggin' yearthworms to go fishin' wid an' lettin' all 'em cows an' ca'fs git together! Don't make no diffe'nce to him if us *don't* have no milk foh de cawfee."

It was much better, 'Bama reasoned, to blame this lack on 'Lijah than be compelled to admit that their only cow, bitten by a snake two days previously, had died.

But the younger stranger, usually so talkative when reference was made to 'Lijah, was strangely silent now.

Another day, as the visitors were dressing in their room, the more taciturn one spoke of their business. "I wonder," he asked, "if the Judge knows anything about the value of the property?"

"Oh, yes!" The younger man's loquaciousness had returned. "He knows all about it. I was talking to 'Lijah only yesterday"—he made sudden pretence of searching for something in his travelling bag—"and he said the Judge had received several offers for the property, but that he wasn't eager to sell. Saving it as a sort of nest egg, I was given to understand. In fact, 'Lijah said——"

"So, you've seen him?" At the first mention of the name, the serious-faced stranger had seemed surprised—almost startled. Then a look of comprehension—of complete and sympathetic understanding—lighted his grave features. And, as he smiled softly, tiny wrinkles creased the corners of his eyes. "What's 'Lijah like?"

"Just what I expected. Quite a character. Unique. He let me understand how these Southern planters feel about parting with any of their landholdings. From what 'Lijah said, the Judge probably wouldn't even name a figure if we were to approach him on the matter. And don't forget that it would be fatal even to think of trying any haggling. He doesn't want for money, with this plantation bringing in a steady income and all the servants he needs. That's not even considering what he gets out of his law practice. Now, I'd suggest——"

"Just a moment!"

At the interruption the voluble young stranger looked up from

his travelling bag. Something that he saw—maybe it was the quiet smile in his companion's eyes—sent an answering flash into his own.

"We're partners," the serious-faced man reminded him, "and ought to be frank with each other. Just how long have you known the actual conditions here? That 'Lijah is a myth? That it's the Judge who has been polishing our shoes——"

"And washing that damned old buggy!" The younger man's face was crimson. "And letting us have his saddle horse—the only one on the place—while he rode a mule! Think of it! That hospitable old aristocrat! Poverty-stricken! My God, I——" He stammered and stopped.

"We both understand, I guess." The quiet-spoken man extended his hand, which was grasped in silence.

That evening they announced to Judge Holmsted that, having finished their inspection, they were ready to return home. After thanking the Judge for his hospitality, the younger stranger broached the matter of business. They were not only timberland investors, it appeared, but dealt also in other property. But, as he tried diplomatically to come to the subject uppermost in his mind, he seemed strangely ill at ease for one accustomed to business deals of magnitude. And finally, instead of the tactful approach which he had planned, he came very bluntly to the point.

"There's a deposit of mica on that hill forty of yours, Judge," he said simply. "Would you care to sell it?"

That old hill forty! Hope blossomed faintly in Judge Holmsted's breast. The strangers might—it was barely possible that they might —pay enough for that rocky, worthless waste to take care of that threatening interest note. If so, he was assured tenancy of his home for another six months. After that . . .

But the stranger was speaking again. "We realize, Judge, that, between gentlemen, there should be no haggling over such a thing as price. We've talked it over, my friend and I, and have decided to offer you just what the property is worth to us."

That faint gleam of hope flickered and died. Evidently the strangers considered the hill forty almost valueless. Foolish! Just

an old man dreaming . . . Holmacres . . . home of his ancestors . . . home of hospitality. . . .

He heard the stranger's voice again. He was speaking rapidly. "We can offer you, for all rights to the land, fifty thousand dollars."

Fifty thousand dollars! One watching Judge Holmsted closely might have noticed a sudden throbbing of the blue veins at his temples; might have detected a slight tremor in the hand that went up, trying unconcernedly to stroke his gray goatee; might even have observed his other hand grip tightly for a moment the arm of the chair on which it rested. Maybe, in that brief instant, the Judge saw a dream fulfilled: broad fields fenced to pasture and dotted with sleek cattle and fat swine; bottom lands, yellow with ripening corn; barns and outhouses, as befitted a vast estate; Holmacres, with its doors once more flung wide. . . .

But whatever might have been his emotions, he gave no evidence of them, as he answered with his usual grave courtesy:

"So far as I know, gentlemen, the matter can be arranged on that basis."

When the strangers left next morning he expressed regret that he could not accompany them to town, since urgent matters necessitated his presence on the plantation. They could leave Grover Cleveland and the buggy at the livery stable in Wynnesborough. He would send 'Lijah for them.

After they had gone he seated himself before the old rosewood secretary. Maybe he dreamed again . . . of quail hunting during the crisp months of fall . . . of fox hounds in their kennels . . . of servants. Servants?

Suddenly he drew up a sheet of paper and began writing in a firm, precise script. And when he had finished he scanned what he had written:

WANTED: Negro, house servant, male, aged fifty, or thereabouts, for light work in plantation home. Must be willing to answer to the name of Elijah. Apply B. L. H. care *Clarion*.

BASQUERIE

By

ELEANOR MERCEIN KELLY

From BASQUERIE; *published by Harper and Brothers. By permission of the author.*

BASQUERIE was originally published in *The Saturday Evening Post* as a short story, and was included as such among the O. Henry Memorial Prize selections for 1926. Mrs. Kelly has recently continued the story, extending it to novel form under the same title.

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On her father's side Mrs. Kelly is descended from a family of Southern France whose earlier forebears came from the Pyrenees region, and it is possible that her deep interest in things Basque is due to this strain of Basque blood. She often visits the Pyrenees, and she has used the region as the background of several of her stories.

She is the author of a trilogy of Kentucky novels, *Kildares of Storm, Why Joan?* and *The Mansion House;* a short romance about a half-Japanese child (*Toya the Unlike*); and a number of short stories, which in most cases have Kentucky or European backgrounds.

BASQUERIE

By Eleanor Mercein Kelly

I

EMILY found Biarritz, now that the season was over, something of a bore; but they lingered on, partly because the rates were so much lower, and partly because her stepmother, Suzanne, seemed to be finishing up a little affair with the director. Emily shrugged at the thought. Duval was presentable enough, thanks to his opportunities; and of course Suzanne at her age had to take her men as she could get them; but really, a hotel director —— Surely one might fly one's kite a little higher than that.

Some weeks earlier the beach, even at this early hour—that charming intimate curve of beach, like the dress circle of a theater —would have been brilliant with striped bathing tents, vivid great parasols, gayly dressed and undressed ladies of the three worlds: great, lesser, and half. Emily wondered in which of these she and Suzanne were usually classed by the onlookers. But what did they matter, the onlookers? There was still a yacht or two about. Emily had noticed a very nice one, Spanish probably, docked in the lower town, but the owners did not come to the casino, or Emily would have met them. Duval was very useful in that way. Nobody of any importance was stopping at the hotel, merely a few domestic parties, of the onlooker class.

Emily yawned. She seemed, in her shapeless little-girl frock, with the pale waves of hair cropped close to her pretty head, very young and frail, her skin of that delicate magnolia pallor which is thick enough never to burn or freckle. . . .

Flowerlike every feature
As if one's breath would fray the lily of a creature.

And, indeed, a good deal of breath had been wasted in the effort here and there. Emily owed her unfrayed lilyhood, and also the fact that her exquisite, fragile little body was as muscular and active as that of a cat, to the dying counsels of her father—his best and practically his only legacy to her.

"The contours, my pet, are essential," Mr. Weldon had adjured her. "To keep really fit, exercise is advisable—swimming, riding, skiing, tennis, whatever is the *jeu* of the place, that you must do well; but not too well. Sports are as helpful in making acquaintance as a good dog, or going to the English church. Bridge, too, but in moderation, my pet; otherwise it is bad for the expression. And, of course, you will not be seen at the tables"—he meant the sort in casinos—"until after you are thirty. By that time you will have married, so it will not matter what you do. But it is wretched form to appear sporting before thirty.

"With regard to marriage," went on this very experienced gentleman, "my advice to you is the same as in golf: Keep your eye on the ball. Remember that a prince, Oriental or Slavic, is the equivalent of a duke, Continental; of a baronet, English; and of a millionaire, American. No matter what distractions offer, no matter what temptations arise—and there will be temptations, or you are not my daughter—keep your eye on the ball."

She was his daughter, and she had done so. Poor dear papa! He, too, had known the difficulties which beset the path of a wandering beauty in Europe, none better; and he had done his best for her. Since he found himself unable to leave his daughter a suitable income, he had made what amend was possible; he had left her a stepmother who had one, and who could furnish as well the necessary background of chaperonage. Not that Suzanne as a background was all that could be desired, perhaps; but one did what one could. She was at least of an amiable and generous nature.

"I think," said the girl to herself, "that I shall go out into the

Jeu: sport.

Bay of Biscay and think things over." She always did her best thinking in the bathtub.

Since nobody was about to stare except a few natives, she did not bother to shroud her slim loveliness in a beach wrap, but ran out on to the nearer of the two little pine-clad promontories which jut out into the water and took a neat header. Then she turned over on her back and let the Atlantic playfully slap at her face and tug at her with its undertow, while she thought.

There was a good deal to think about; for example, young Prince Abdul—only an Egyptian, to be sure, and almost dark enough to be doubtful; it was hard to shed one's American prejudices. But she loved his yacht and his string of polo ponies, and he adored her silvery blondness; and the dot was certainly no object. What had happened to put him off? Had she seemed too cool? And old Sir Harry Congers, correct, substantial as his appearance; he had been on the very point of speaking to mamma —as Suzanne became on occasion—when something had called him away from Biarritz. He had left a bushel or so of roses and a very pretty bracelet, but he had not returned. Why? Had she been too approachable?

There were moments when Emily confessed to a slight inward panic. Nearing thirty and nothing in sight! Was she never to have done with this roving from pillar to post, this robbing Peter, as it were, to keep from paying Paul? Could the trouble be Suzanne?

Poor dear papa, she had to admit, had rather overreached himself when he married that lady. If he could only have postponed his demise a little longer, until his child was safely settled in a suitable walk of life! An unattached father can do so much more for a girl than she can do for herself.

A wave slapped her suddenly too hard to be pleasant, and she saw that she was in danger of being swept against the boiling rocks, where a man had recently, at a high tide like this, been pounded to a jelly. She exerted herself and got out of the caldron,

Dot: dowry, marriage portion.

but the effort left her tired. She thought she would land on the farther rocks, where the slope was gradual. But after a few moments she saw that she could not make it, and glanced over her shoulder to call the coast-guard boat which usually waited near that dangerous point. But the season was over; a frugal municipal government had withdrawn the boat.

"Well, well!" said Emily aloud. "Here I am in the Bay of Biscay with nobody to rely on but myself." Not, however, an unusual situation for her.

She struggled a little and swallowed water. "If I don't make it," she thought, "they'll find me in the surf in a very messy condition, and the newspapers will have headlines—The Beautiful Miss Weldon of Kentucky Drowned at Fashionable Biarritz—why must beauties always be from Kentucky or from Baltimore?—and Suzanne will have a chance to wear mourning again; which would suit her very well; so why struggle?"

She was roused from these macabre reflections by a voice which spoke to her out of the deep: "If mademoiselle will put her hand on my shoulder, please——" So a coast guard had been watching after all.

She lay in a cove on the rock island, resting, a little sick from the salt water she had swallowed, glad of the sun that beat down upon her in that sheltered place. She wished she had more clothes on; the tide breeze was chilly, and after all, coast guards are men. But this one stood with his back to her, as far away as he could get; if the rock had been larger he would have been farther. It got smaller as the tide rose. She smiled to realize that. He was a handsome fellow, young, with straight black hair, high cheek bones, deep-set eyes; not a Spanish type, nor yet quite French. Emily looked him over appreciatively before she spoke.

"Thank you so much for saving me from a watery grave."

"It is nothing—mademoiselle, I mean, was still swimming quite strongly. I was not necessary."

"Oh, but you were! I was about to give up swimming. I

Macabre: gruesome.

wonder," she murmured idly, "if your name happens to be Neptune?"

"No, mademoiselle. My name is Esteban."

Still he would not look at her. She saw with amusement that he was embarrassed rather than intrigued by her appearance. Evidently this was no Frenchman.

"Neptune and siren alone on rock," she murmured, imagining the picture; and saw his cheek twitch a little as if he understood. "You need not wait, thank you," she added pleasantly.

"Mademoiselle has been good enough to say I was necessary ——"

"Not now," she replied. "I shall not commit suicide today. You must remember your duties. There may be other discouraged swimmers about."

He hesitated, and then said quietly, "Mademoiselle is mistaken in thinking me a coast guard. I was watching—only for mademoiselle."

"Oh!" It was her turn to be embarrassed. She looked at him more closely. There was something vaguely familiar in his appearance. The smooth skin, brown as an Indian's, tattoo marks on the chest like a sailor's, a fine athlete's figure—also, despite the shyness, his air of quiet confidence. It was difficult, she reflected, to be sure of a gentleman without his clothes on. Her rescuer wore only a scant swimming suit.

"I beg your pardon," she murmured. "You say you were watching for me?"

He replied surprisingly, with a sort of controlled fervor, "I have been watching for mademoiselle ever since the first moment I saw her."

She bit her lip. "Really? You are not stopping at our hotel, I think?"

He shook his head. There were other hotels near by, of course; there was that yacht in the lower town. "I am native here," he said.

Emily regretted her apology. Her head lifted haughtily. For a

mere native he had been impertinent. But for all she knew there might be native gentlemen.

"You mean you are Basque?"

"Yes, mademoiselle, Basque."

"But you speak English remarkably well."

He said quietly, "To one who speaks the Euskara, no language is impossible; in that we are like Russians. But I have been in England; also in America."

"In the United States?"

"In both Americas. Basques are a seafaring people."

"You are a sailor, you mean? A fisherman, perhaps?" She had heard of Basque whalers off Newfoundland.

"Both, Mademoiselle; and other things."

Suddenly she knew where she had seen him; down in the lower town, working over a boat on the stocks, barefoot, his trousers rolled to the knee. She had realized for the first time how becoming the Basque costume was to a handsome man, the close-fitting *béret* worn over one ear, the wide red sash. She remembered, too, that the man had looked at her as he was doing now, with grave shy glances which turned away when they met hers. Emily was expert in such matters; she knew there was nothing to resent or fear in admiration such as this, no matter from whom it came. She decided to play Cophetua, as it were, to his beggar maid.

"Sit down here beside me," she said kindly—"you will have to soon, anyway, if this rock gets any smaller—and tell me about Basques. It is so strange to be living among a people of whom one knows nothing, whose life goes on independently of us, as if we were not here."

"It has been going on independently of you for thirty centuries," he remarked quietly. "You find it strange to see a people deeply rooted as a forest; while we find it strange to see a people who

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Euskara: the Basque language.

Béret: Basque cap.

Cophetua: a legendary African king, who married a beggar maid.

wander about in families, like the Arabs, but without the Arab's tents, living in hotels, railway cars, other people's houses——"

Emily found herself somewhat on the defensive. "But the Basques are wanderers too; you said so yourself. Sailors and fishermen——"

"—and smugglers and at one time pirates," he finished for her. "Yes, mademoiselle; but with this difference: Basques return. The *etcheonda* is our home, our abiding place, no matter from how far we come to it."

"The *etcheonda?*"

"In Germany it is called the *Stammhaus;* in America—it is not called at all." He smiled gravely. "The *etcheonda* is the home to which one of our families belongs from generation to generation; where all the sons may bring their wives to live when they are done with roving; to whose shelter every member of the family has his right, and to which all pay tribute."

"No," said Emily thoughtfully, "in America it is not 'called at all,' because it does not exist. With most of us the nearest approach to an *etcheonda* would be an apartment building, changed every few years. Which is perhaps why we do so much family wandering."

"Doubtless, mademoiselle," he agreed.

Emily found the fellow oddly stimulating, intelligent; even humorous in a grave, simple way. And he was right. Roots—was not that what they needed, people like her and her father; what they desperately wanted and somehow could never find? They had torn themselves loose from their own foothold, the place where they belonged; yet where was that place? Certainly not an ugly prairie town near Chicago, where she had happened to be born! Again the slight panic came over her. Nearing thirty and no haven in sight; youth gone, beauty going, her charm acquiring a rather professional edge. She pulled herself together with a shiver. What nonsense! Her beauty going, when she could see the reflection of it in the eyes of every man she met—even this enamored native?

"I wonder why you have been watching for me," she murmured. It was playing with fire, of course, but Emily wanted to play with fire just then; it gave her a fictitious sense of warmth.

"Because I could not help myself," he muttered. "On the beach, at the casino windows, beneath your terrace—I could not keep away." Still he did not look at her.

She shook her head gently. "I am afraid you have been falling a little in love with me, Esteban. You must not do that."

"Why?" he demanded abruptly.

She laughed a little. Why, indeed, when his respect was so extreme that he could not make up his mind to sit beside her? She shivered again, this time not from cold. The game was beginning—the old exciting game.

"Mademoiselle is chilled!" he exclaimed, noticing the shiver out of the back of his head, apparently. "It would be best to run about a little."

It would be best, thought Emily dryly, to swim straight back to shore; but aloud she said, "In bare feet, on these rocks? No, thank you." She looked up at him from under plaintive lashes. "If you want to go on saving my life, I really think you will have to come and—keep me warm yourself." Her tone was quite matter-of-fact.

The temptation had come upon her too suddenly to resist; the need of strong arms about her, the touch of that powerful shoulder on which she had rested as they swam. It was not the first time she had been aware of primitive emotions, but as a rule she did not yield to them; she merely used them. Nobody had warned her that emotions, like muscles, strengthen with use.

He was no longer glancing at her with swift, shy looks like caresses; he had turned to stare at her in startled questioning.

"Don't be afraid of me, Esteban," she smiled encouragingly. "I'm not afraid of you. See how I trust you."

With a muttered exclamation he did as he was bid. His arm, stiff as a ramrod, encircled her coldly, but she could feel him trembling. Certainly this was no Frenchman! Even one of her

own compatriots might have felt the national chivalry strained by such circumstances. She laughed a little, but she was trembling, too.

"You are trustworthy, aren't you?" she teased him. "Perhaps you'd better go then, or you might be tempted to kiss me. Just as you like, of course!"

"Madre de Dios!" he exclaimed, and made his choice.

The tide had turned when they swam slowly and easily back together; easily, because the tide went out more calmly than it had come in, slowly because below the point of pines they were to separate forever. Esteban did not know this, but Emily did.

"Look here! I don't want you to think American girls are all like this," she said suddenly, and rather oddly, considering that she rarely had anything to do with her compatriots. "We're not so bad as our bark—fortunately. We're rather decent as a rule, I hardly know what came over me—a touch of sun, perhaps."

He turned toward her a look of grave and happy understanding. "We Basques are called the children of the sun, mademoiselle. You are not accustomed to it. Do not fear! Love comes so, without warning, if the heart is ready. It was so that it came to me."

"You think this has been love, then?" she asked with some irony.

His answer shamed and touched her: "Have I not proof?"

She wondered about it as they breasted the long waves together, side by side, gazing at each other. She wanted to remember how he looked, always. Was he right, this stranger whom she had kissed and would never see again? Love—the meaning of things, the reason for them? No wonder, she thought rather piteously, that people were always trying to find it.

Emily had matched her skill with famous amorists more than once, and had not lost. True, she had not won, either; but there are contests in which not to lose is sufficient victory. Despite a somewhat intensive experience, she had remained not so much skeptical of love as entirely ignorant of it. She believed it, indeed, one of those picturesque myths in which people conspire to pretend credence, for some reason; like the pretty idea that to be good

Madre de Dios: Mother of God.

is to be happy. She, for example, was quite good, technically speaking; but she had never been at all happy. Whereas Suzanne was always happy, and yet —— The girl shrugged a cynical shoulder, and gave her stepmother the benefit of the doubt.

Thrills of the sort women discuss so freely nowadays she was quite familiar with; the thrill of the chase, of being chased; the thrill of uncertainty, not quite sure whether you could handle your man or not—far more exciting than, though on the same order as, the thrill of handling a lively horse. But this queer weakness, the melting sensation behind the eyeballs when you looked at each other, this absurd feeling that somebody was of more importance to you than yourself—an hour or two since, Emily could not have conceived the sensation of finding anybody more important to her than herself. Yet here she was dreading her final parting with this new lover, not so much for her sake as for his; she feared to hurt him. Curious!

She let Esteban down easily when the time came, promising to meet him on the point of pines as soon as it was dark enough.

Her stepmother did not appear to have missed her particularly. "You've been gone ages, dear," she said, glancing up from her novel. "Swimming again? Such a blessing to have skin that doesn't burn! I should have worried about you horribly, except that Duval fortunately discovered you through his field glass, out on the rocks with a strange young man. Quite, a beauty, too, he said. Who was it, darling?"

"Really, I don't know," replied Emily indifferently; but her face flushed.

"Eh? You don't know?" Suzanne put down her book, interested more in the blush than in the stranger; she had not often seen Emily blush. "Yet Duval reported that you seemed to be on very friendly terms with him. What chances girls do take nowadays! Before I was married, I wouldn't have dreamed of going swimming with a man I did not know, especially in a one-piece bathing suit without stockings!" She added a bit of maternal

counsel: "Always remember to sit on the far side of the rocks, darling. This place simply bristles with field glasses."

Emily, of course, had no intention of going to the point of pines as soon as it was dark. That episode was over. She was not so much ashamed of it as alarmed by it. Was her little brain-storm a symptom? Could it be possible that she was getting susceptible as age crept up on her, like Suzanne? Inclined to what she called sloppiness? A Basque fisherman! Why, it was worse than a hotel director!

She invited herself to spend the night with an English spinster she knew, living over in Saint-Jean-de-Luz, who had fallen in love, as plain old women often did, with Emily's cool young beauty. Miss Dibbs should be an antidote for Esteban.

But she was not. Miss Dibbs was specializing, in her mild artist fashion, on things Basque, collecting *cruches, ferratas, makhilas,* gay Basque linens. She talked constantly of her hobby. Emily, all night long, could not lose the thought of Esteban—Esteban taking her in his arms, Esteban waiting for her under the dark pines. She tossed about feverishly in Miss Dibbs' spinsterly verbena-scented sheets and listened to a *basauflûte* played by some native lover down among the mimosas. "Cool young beauty," indeed!

Her hostess was delighted with Emily's new interest in what she called "Basquerie"; took her to see an ancient church with its little ancient ship suspended from the roof in memory of some sea disaster; its triple galleries, where the men sat in tiers so as not to distract the attention of their women, who knelt below on the black praying rugs—sea-faring folk having special need of the prayers of their women. She drove Emily to a graveyard to see certain inscriptions she had found on the discoid crosses there; sun symbols, moon and stars, jagged streaks to represent lightning.

"You see, they've not been Christians long, poor dears. Only a matter of a few centuries," she explained.

Cruches: (See page 294.) *Ferratas:* (See page 302.) *Makhilas:* (See page 283.)

Basauflûte: a musical instrument.

But they could not, after all, inspect the gravestones, because some men were playing *pelota* there.

"Isn't it quaint of them to use their church wall as a *frontón* to bounce the eternal ball against?" smiled Miss Dibbs indulgently.

Emily's attention was caught by one player, a splendidly built young man in white flannels confined by the usual broad red sash, whose muscles rippled under the skin like those of a young tiger, who caught and returned the ball from the scoop-shaped wicker *chistera* on his arm with the speed and precision of a machine. Did all Basques, she wondered, look alike, or was it that she could not get Esteban out of her mind? As if drawn by her gaze, he turned toward her.

"Why," exclaimed Miss Dibbs, who had her British interest in all manly sports, "if it isn't the champion, the man who has been winning all the *pelota* tournaments this summer! Yes, yes, it's Urruty himself!"

It was also Esteban; and after a long unsmiling gaze at Emily, he turned quietly back to his game.

That made it a little better, she told herself ironically; he was an athlete then, as well as a sailor, carpenter, what not. It was almost like one's schooldays—being smitten with the charms of a baseball hero, who delivered the groceries in odd moments. Her lip curled in self-scorn.

After it was dark that night, she went out alone onto the point of pines. Not that she expected to find Esteban; doubtless he had learned his lesson. The moon had not yet risen; it was dark under the trees, and quite deserted. Emily wondered where the natives did their courting out of season. She was, nevertheless, not surprised to hear his voice from the near darkness: "I have been waiting, mademoiselle."

"Waiting? When I failed you before?" she rallied him.

Pelota: a Spanish game (originally Basque) of the handball type. The ball is thrown with the *chistera,* strapped to the arm.

Frontón: the main wall of a pelota court.

"I knew that you would fail the first time. Love is terrifying when it comes like this."

"You speak," she said lightly, "as if you have had a good deal of experience, my friend."

"I am a man," was the simple reply. "But to a young girl it is even more terrifying, naturally. I was well content. All night I played to you, there under the mimosa. You heard my *basau-flûte?*"

"Unfortunately, no!" Emily laughed a little. "I was not at home, Esteban. I had run away."

"Nevertheless, you heard me," he said mysteriously, and smiled. "Ah, mademoiselle, do you not know that if you do not come to me, I must come to you, always?"

It was a curious thing to have happened to Emily Weldon, of all people; Emily, who prided herself on a steady head; who knew to a hairbreadth the limit of the danger line; who had an instinct for the moment a look must be turned into a laugh, the moment champagne ceases to exhilarate and begins to relax. She had never been of those who are more kissed against than kissing, as the phrase goes. But her kisses had been experimental rather than symptomatic; she employed them as scientists employ their test tubes, very accurately.

Now her hand seemed to have lost its cunning. She, the manipulator of emotions, was being manipulated by them; she abandoned herself to this impossible affair with a native *pelota* player as if her father had never given her the benefit of dying counsels. True, there was no ball about at the moment to keep an eye upon.

She was with Esteban at all hours of the day and night; swam with him at dawn, spent hours out on the rocks with him—on the far side—watched the moon rise and set with him down on the beach of the lower town, where there were only native eyes to see. What, she thought sometimes angrily, was her stepmother thinking about to ask no questions? But Suzanne was probably grateful enough for liberty of her own; the girl had not the heart just

then to be too severe with her in the matter of Monsieur Duval. Emily had, as usual, nobody to take care of her but herself.

And Esteban. The simple fellow's passion for her amounted to adoration; never in her experience had she been wooed with such intensity of fervor—the "fiery Basque," indeed! Yet no discreet man of the world could have shown more restraint, more delicacy in his wooing. It baffled and rather annoyed her. Since she had chosen thus to fling her slipper over the hedge, who was he to decline to pick it up?

"Esteban"—they were out on the rocks, with only the wide Atlantic before them—"why is it you are always so—so careful of me, as if I were something fragile? I'm not! Why do you never kiss me —enough?"

"It would not be possible to kiss you enough," he said under his breath, in a tone that thrilled her. "But do you not know," he added more calmly, "that with Basques, as with Americans, women are sacred?"

"You flatter my countrymen," she murmured. "Even if they'd rather not be sacred, Esteban? If they'd rather just be loved?"

"With us, it is the same thing." He repeated a legend current among his people: The Romans, in pagan days, had twitted the Basques with having only one god to worship. "It is true we have but one god," they admitted, "but we have many goddesses."

"Who are they?" asked the Romans.

"Our wives," replied the Basques.

For the first time Emily realized—realized with a pang that was part anger and part pain—that this absurd, adorable creature expected to marry her. Marry "the beautiful Miss Weldon," as the fashion sheets called her; she who had almost been the Princess Abdul, who might yet become, with luck, the second Lady Congers.

She urged her stepmother that night to go away from Biarritz; but Suzanne, usually of so yielding a nature, was quite firm. "You see," she explained, "it really is a matter of economy, darling. The *moustiques* aren't too bad yet, and we're practically guests of the

Moustiques: mosquitos.

house. Now don't get on your high horse about it! Why shouldn't we be? We've been good patrons, the hotel is practically empty, and they like to have people of our sort about; it gives tone. Besides," she added innocently, "it isn't as if we were any personal expense to Monsieur Duval, you know."

Suzanne really was a remarkable manager; what she accomplished in the way of concessions, commissions from tradespeople and the like, was quite miraculous; also mysterious.

Emily gave her little mental shrug. After all, this was Suzanne's affair; she could hardly be expected to look a gift horse in the mouth.

In the end it was Esteban who decided to leave Biarritz; announced his intention quite suddenly, as they sat together in their favorite trysting place. "Tomorrow, my heart, I must go home," he said.

"Home! But I thought you lived here?"

"In the town? Ah, no, I shall never live in a town. My home is not far away, in the hills. My grandmother wants me now."

"Your grandmother!" She laughed and drew his lips down to hers. "Does your grandmother want you, do you think, as much as I do?"

"It is for the haying," he explained. "And after that comes the irrigation of the fields. Then there are some young mares to be taken at this season to the *haras*. Yes, I am needed. Also"—he exploded his bomb quietly—"my grandmother wishes to see you."

"Me?"

"Yes. I have written to her and to my father that I have found you at last. They are glad. It is time I should have sons. I am, since my brother's death, the heir of our *etcheonda*."

"You mean," gasped Emily, "that you are expecting to take me with you as your wife?"

"Oh, no. First they must see you; I must have my grandmother's consent. She is the head of our house." He spoke as if it were the house of princes.

Haras: stud stables.

The girl crowed with laughter. "This is delicious! You want to take me home with you on approval?"

"Yes," he said simply, and kissed her.

She sobered; an idea had come to her. Why not go with him, add a few days more to the idyl, away from the prying eyes, away from the world—her world, with its artificial restraints? She had given him so much; if she could give him more, a little time of happiness to remember always, it might lessen the hurt, afterward. It was not of herself she thought now, only of him; it had come to that. . . .

She thought rapidly. She could pretend she was going over to stay with her friend Miss Dibbs. She would see his home, his people—they had become of peculiar interest to her. She would be very sweet to them, and to Esteban. Then, having made him quite happy, she would go quietly away to her own life, as he was now going back to his. Happiness, observation had taught her, was not a thing that lasts in any case. Theirs would be shorter than most, perhaps, but at least they would have had something. She put her hand in his.

"How do we get there, Esteban? By train? By diligence?" she asked.

No, no, such ways were good enough for Basquaises. "When an American lady travels," he cried, "she travels in style!" His eyes sparkled with triumph; he was happy as a child over her consent. His plans, he confessed, were already laid. They would travel by automobile.

"But," demurred Emily with unwonted consideration—she was not accustomed to poor lovers—"I'm afraid you will find it very expensive to take an automobile, dear."

He smiled tenderly. What a good little housewife it would be! But for once they could afford to be expensive, he said. "We are not too poor, we Urruty." She had been tactless; she should have remembered his good peasant pride.

"And your grandmother—she will not be shocked by my making this journey with you, alone?"

"Shocked?" He stared a little, then smiled, again. "It is not a long journey by automobile—barely a day. And my grandmother is not so easily shocked; she is not *mondaine.*"

Emily felt rather foolish. Naturally, in this class there would be few conventions.

That night she asked some casual questions of Monsieur Duval, whose business it was to know as much as possible about everybody. Could he tell her something of a family named Urruty, in that neighborhood? What sort of people they were? How they lived?

The director gave her a shrewd little glance, which she noticed. Doubtless he had seen her with Esteban; but what of that?

"Urruty? It is a Basque name, not uncommon hereabouts. Living in the *Basses-Pyrénées,* you say? In that case they would be farmers, herdsmen. All Basques are farmers, mademoiselle; unless they are fishermen, sailors, smugglers; or shopkeepers, perhaps, or laborers ——"

"That is to say that they are working people," she interrupted impatiently—she never troubled herself to be too polite to this gentleman, which was a mistake. "There is no sort of aristocracy among them?"

He shrugged ironically. "In the American sense, no. All Basques are noble. They were ennobled as a nation some centuries ago, for services against the Saracens in the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa. But," he murmured, slightly smiling, "it is not an effete nobility. As mademoiselle suggests, it is not too proud to sweat."

II

As their panting car wound up and up the Route des Pyrénées, leaving behind the blue curve of the Atlantic, edged with its dazzling red-roofed houses, Emily began to feel the dreamy exhilaration which comes so often in high places. It was as if the

Mondaine: worldly.
Basses-Pyrénées: Lower Pyrenees.

day, all gold and green and fragrant with sea and snow, had just been washed for them and hung out to dry in the sun.

"Like the clothes of the Infant Jesus," Esteban assented to her fancy, "which the Virgin Mary washes always on Saturday. That is why there is always sun on Saturday—or so say our Catholic neighbors, the Catalans."

"Basques are not Catholic then?" she asked.

"Not always. Some of us have been Huguenot. Basques are adaptable; or I should not dare be taking to my home a wife who is—of what faith, mademoiselle?"

Emily shrugged. "Beauty worship, I think. In cities I go to the handsomest cathedral. I, too, am adaptable, you see."

He turned a serious, questioning look upon her. "Do you mean that, if I were to ask, you would be willing to become Catholic?"

"Perhaps," she said, "if you were to ask —— Esteban!"

He was deeply moved; his hand closed over hers. "Ah, mademoiselle, you make me proud, and humble."

"Too humble," she exclaimed impatiently. "Why do you still call me mademoiselle? Surely you are no longer afraid of me?"

He did not answer for a moment. Then he said very low, "Of you, no. It is for our happiness I have fear. It is too much."

The girl thrilled. This man, she realized, would be hard to get away from.

Their progress was impeded sometimes by odd vehicles: a two-wheeled cart like an ancient Roman chariot, drawn by white oxen with pads of fleece on their heads and fringe across their eyes; heavy-laden *carros* with five or six mules driven tandem; a top-heavy three-storied diligence, women seated below, behind curtains of red-checked calico, men on the banquette above, without curtains, and a curious assortment of luggage on top. The horses shied from their noisy engine to the very edge of a precipice. There was a moment of great danger; but the women did not scream, the men were silent. Only the driver muttered to his

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Carros: wagons.

Banquette: the upper part of a stage-coach.

leaping horses, "Hari, Pompon! Grisette!" and went stolidly on.

Sometimes they passed men on foot, moving along easily mile after mile in their light canvas *espadrilles,* wearing hooded capes, carrying over the shoulder a two-ended bag, or *bursac,* sometimes with a big blue cotton umbrella, and always the *makhila,* a sort of alpenstock with a knife screwed inside for defense against the fierce dogs and the fiercer wild pigs of the Pyrenees.

Now and again their laboring engine had to be refreshed with water; an easy matter, since every few yards a cataract came tumbling down the mountain and added itself to the stream that flowed beside the road. Emily was reminded that they were crossing one of the world's great watersheds.

Esteban's naïve pride in his rented car's performance amused the girl, accustomed, in lack of other evidence, to select her admirers according to the make of automobile they drove. "It is no longer young," he commented, "but vigorous, like my father, who, with but one arm, has managed to marry himself a plump young wife and can still plow his field in a day."

Emily frivolously suggested that their engine sounded as if it, too, could plow its field in a day.

"Yes, it is a fine car," he assented in all seriousness. "Mademoiselle, I suppose, has not often driven in such a car as this?"

"Indeed, no," she confessed with truth, careful not to smile at his simplicity. But stealing a glance at him, she saw that he himself was smiling quietly. They laughed together. Perhaps he was not so simple as she thought.

Presently they came to higher, lonelier places, where they passed no vehicles at all, only now and then great pink-white cattle that lumbered across the road under the clever, anxious direction of shaggy dogs of the same color. There was everywhere a faint, blowing sound of bells and of rushing water. Far below, the little fields made a patchwork quilt of the valley, with here and there a village flatly embroidered, or a church steeple. A tiny wisp of fleece detached itself from the nearest peak and drifted toward

Espadrilles: rope-soled canvas slippers.

them. The sun disappeared; a curious opaque light was around them, as if they had penetrated the heart of a moonstone. Looking down, Emily saw that the valley was no longer visible. They were above a cloud.

She shivered a little. "No, I am not cold," she told Esteban. "But I feel as if that cloud had come between me and any world I know—blotted it out completely. It is my turn," she said a little wanly, "to feel rather frightened."

He stopped the car and got out for her a hooded cape such as the peasants they passed had worn. It was so heavy she could hardly lift it.

"My grandmother had it made on the place out of the wool of our own black sheep, and sent it to me in your New York for fear I should be cold there."

New York—the name seemed strange to her. She had a momentary vision of Esteban stalking along Fifth Avenue with his shepherd's cape and *bursac* and *makhila,* attracting from the crowds as they passed no more attention than they gave the great blond Swede who used to exercise along Fifth Avenue on winter days in white flannels, hatless, his blouse open at the throat. The memory of those hurrying, indifferent crowds frightened her far more than the realization that she was alone, high above civilization, lost in the mountain peaks with a man who loved her. It would take more than a shepherd's cape to keep one warm in New York.

"Will mademoiselle have a bouquet?" Esteban suggested, smiling.

She saw that though they had passed the timber line, the bleak slope was covered with millions of little flowers—bluebells, buttercups, gentian, exquisite rare ferns.

"They say it is the blood of Roland that brings so many flowers here," he told her.

"What—our Roland? 'Childe Roland to the Dark Tower came——'"

"Our Roland, too," he reminded her. "It was here at Ronces-

"Childe Roland to the Dark Tower came"; a line from *King Lear* and used in a poem by Robert Browning.

valles that he blew upon the great horn and died. Our children know him well—my little stepbrother had once a tin sword and a hobby-horse, called Durandel and Veillantif, after the sword and horse of Roland; and even now his sheep dog is named Olivier for Roland's friend. We do not forget easily, we Basques! They call our country 'the land where time delays.'"

She repeated it after him rather wistfully—"The land where time delays."

"And it was here also," he added, "that my brother died."

"You mean during the war?"

"No, he was caught smuggling. Our grandmother was so angry with him that she would not look upon his dead face."

Emily asked sympathetically, "Because she felt the—disgrace of it?"

His eyebrows lifted. "There was no disgrace. With us, smuggling is a matter of principle—there should be no tax on necessities between Basques of Spain and Basques of France. It is not a just tax; therefore we ignore it. We would never, of course, bribe a guard, nor attack him; and my brother, who was of a very sensitive honor, felt that he should not even defend himself from a guard, since the man was but doing his duty. So it was that he happened to be killed. But our grandmother was very angry. She felt that he should first have remembered his duty to the *etcheonda,* as oldest son of an oldest son; he who had been trained for the land, as I was not."

"But why is your father not the heir himself, then?"

"His second marriage has displeased my grandmother," said Esteban. "He took a wife from Béarn, where the women are fat and lazy—lowland folk. She is not fitted to succeed my grandmother. The head of a house, with us, appoints the heir," he explained, "and his wife becomes in time the head of the house. You," he added softly, "will, if I outlive my grandmother, become in time the head of our house." His eyes shone at the thought.

A qualm of compunction touched Emily; also a growing dread

of the old Spartan matriarch who took her family inheritance so seriously.

"How do you know that I shall please your grandmother any better than the lazy Béarnaise?" she murmured.

"It is not possible," he said with quiet conviction, "that you could fail to please her."

She kissed him for that. He put her away suddenly, however, as if he were listening. "There—do you hear?"

It was a faint little airy music coming down from above them, together with a tinkle of sheep bells; a thin elfin sound, infinitely lonely, breathing of sun and wind and peace. It seemed the very voice of the Pyrenees.

"A bird?" she whispered.

He shook his head. "It is my little brother, who plays the *chirilion* to amuse his sheep and to keep himself from fear of spirits." He smiled. "Our high pastures are near La Rhune"—he indicated the tallest of the black peaks—"which is the abode of the devil, and Ignacio is timid for his years. My father's wife spoils him; she did not even wish that he should take his year with the sheep."

He explained their custom of sending a boy, when he was twelve, to guard the flocks in the high pastures for a season, quite alone, in order to make of him a man.

"A man at twelve years!" exclaimed Emily pityingly.

"A man at birth, if he is Basque," was the calm reply. "But he must learn to know it."

After all, it was no worse than the English custom of sending even younger lads away to the brutality of the public schools.

"I don't blame your father's wife," said Emily. "Did you too have your time alone with the sheep, poor little Esteban?"

"Naturally. It was a very good time. That was when I came to enjoy books. I have brought some books to Ignacio."

He cupped his hands about his mouth and shouted, "Nacio! Nacio!" The echoes came back to them, rebounding from cliff to

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Chirilion: a small flute.

cliff, faintly and more faint—Nacio-o-o, Nacio-o-o. He put two fingers into his mouth and whistled, sharp and shrill.

Presently they saw movement far above, near the snow line. Sheep appeared; then a dog, bounding eagerly; then a boy's thin little figure descending toward them in great leaps, using his *makhila* as a vaulting pole, hurling himself recklessly down the rock-strewn slope.

"Hi, Olivier—*sois sage, mon cher!*" laughed Esteban, putting down the great dog that leaped upon him, whining with joy; while the grinning, eager lad, seeing Emily, stopped short, shy as one of his own sheep, ready to run away.

Esteban caught him in both arms and they kissed on either cheek. It touched Emily to see such obviously male creatures so unashamed of their affection. Then he led the boy to her, murmuring something in Basque.

"B'jou', madame," Nacio muttered, in an agony of bashfulness. Esteban, laughing, whispered again. "I mean—ma'm'selle!" groaned the boy; and then Emily, to put him out of his misery, bent and kissed him herself.

"I—give you welcome—*belle-sœur!*" he gasped unprompted, and turned and fled. Esteban had to run after him to give him the books and a box of sweets he had brought.

They left him halfway up the mountain, near his sheep, staring after them wistfully, the dog beside him staring, too, waving a bushy tail in farewell.

"Nacio will not have to play his *chirilion* tonight," said his brother. "He will be too happy."

"With that great box of chocolates?"

"With the memory of his kiss," said Esteban. "We Basques know how to remember. Ah, Emilie—Emilie!" He did not call her mademoiselle again.

They lunched deliciously, upon the terrace of a crude little inn

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Sois sage, mon cher! be careful, my dear!
B'jou', madame: How do you do, madam.
Belle-soeur: sister-in-law.

down the next valley, on trout caught before their eyes, wild mountain strawberries and soured cream; with the golden wine of Jurançon, in which they had bathed the little Henry of Navarre at birth to make him strong. He, too, seemed a familiar hero of the day.

Afterward, to make more palatable the thick Spanish coffee, Esteban ordered her a little glass of that liqueur compounded of flowers and fire which Basques called Yzarra. The patronne of the inn, a thickset peasant woman, shared this with them, speaking to Esteban by name, staring anxiously and inimically at Emily.

"She doesn't seem to like me," murmured Emily in English.

"She is not accustomed to Americans of your sort," he explained. "Only to the kind who rush past in motor lorries, staring and laughing and pointing with the finger as if one were not there. My people love their privacy. That is why strangers are never able to learn the Euskara."

She began to dread the meeting with Esteban's family. It would have been pleasant to linger at this humble, clean little place; to go no farther. Why should they hurry? After all, it was not to see his grandmother that she had come with Esteban.

She caught at his hand, as he was rising to get the car. "Must we?" she whispered. "Can't we stay here awhile?"

"There is still a long way to go over these winding roads, and the night comes early here in the valleys."

"What of that? What," she murmured, "if it should overtake us here?" Languor was gaining upon her, a dreamy content. Nothing mattered but to be with him, away from yesterdays and tomorrows. It was so, she thought, that a happy bride must feel —a bride who had married for love.

But he rallied her in great amusement. "Who is the shy one now? You do not wish to see my home, then? You would like to turn and run away, like Nacio?"

She pulled him down to murmur against his lips, "I want nothing but you—you! To have you hold me in your arms, keep me ——"

He laughed tenderly. "I should not have given you the Yzarra,"

he observed. "It is a man's drink, too fiery for little unaccustomed heads of girls."

She pushed him away and jumped to her feet, very angry. . . . Had he the impertinence to try to teach her, Emily Weldon, a lesson?

She did not speak to him again for some time; but apparently he failed to notice her silence. As they neared his home his spirits soared higher and higher; he began to sing, half under his breath, those melancholy little songs with which primitive peoples express joy. Sometimes the words were unintelligible, but when they were in French, Emily was constrained to listen. One was about a bird which pined in the cage until it was released, and then pined for the cage again. Another was about a valley, such as the deep and narrow *gave* they were traversing, down which stream and road hurried together toward the distant plains and the cities:

"The valley of Andoce, oh, the long valley,
Three times it has broken my heart——"

sang Esteban; and added soberly, "That is a song for my grandmother. Three times it has broken her heart, indeed, this valley—once when all her sons and grandsons together marched down it to the war, from which only three returned; once when they brought her the body of my brother, which she was too angry to look at—but she has never laughed since; and once when they carried down to the churchyard my own little mother, whom she loved better than any child of her own, because she was small and delicate and rare, like you. But now," he said—"now joy is coming to her up 'the long valley'!"

Again compunction smote the girl. They were going too fast for her, these few hours together. She forgot to be angry with him, made him stop the car now and again so that they might listen awhile to the cow-bells and sheep bells, to the Angelus from a steeple far below. How simple life was for these people, how

Gave: a narrow valley (literally, a mountain stream in the Pyrenees).

pure and clean! A song of her own land ran through her head, in fragments:

"Watching the white mist stealing
O'er valley and mead and town, . . .
Like children with violets playing——"

Had she ever been a child playing with violets? She began to weep a little—why, she did not know. It could hardly be an exciting pastime, playing with violets.

Esteban kissed the tears away as they fell, asking no questions. Perhaps he attributed them to the Yzarra.

The shadows were purpling when they came in sight of Esteban's home, from below—a large timbered farmhouse of orange-toned plaster, stained with great age, a queer little turret at one corner, the inevitable high balcony facing the east—a remnant of the old sun worship. Above the arched doorway, she made out a sort of defaced escutcheon.

"Why, Esteban, is it a coat of arms?"

He explained that every family which had provided an alcalde was entitled to such an escutcheon over the doorway; but that the alcalde might be the village blacksmith, the tailor, any man whom his neighbors elected at the yearly *junta* as suitable to fill the position.

"We have had several alcaldes from our house—my father is alcalde now." He added carelessly, "It is a nuisance for a busy man, but one does not refuse."

There was a woman's figure visible in the arch of the doorway.

"That will be Stancia, my brother's widow," remarked Esteban. "She always watches for me. I should tell you that there has been thought among the elders of our marrying. She is good with the ménage, a great help to my grandmother. It would be a pity for

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Alcalde: the head-man of a community.
Junta: election meeting.
Ménage: housekeeping.

her to marry away from our family. But that, I believe, she will never do."

"Why not?" demanded Emily with a sudden stab of jealousy. "Because she is in love with you?"

"I think so," he replied simply. "And she has tempted me—it is always tempting to be loved. But it seems more suitable that she remain true to my brother's memory."

The sentiment, thought Emily, was creditable, but a little hard on Stancia. Was the suttee idea a remnant of their Eastern origin?

"Esteban," she asked suddenly, "have many women—tempted you?"

He shrugged. "Oh, yes; there are many strong, handsome girls here in our valleys. The Spanish are very beautiful, as you know; and in France—what a look they have out of the eye! Up alone with the sheep or out on the ocean, a man has time to think of women. But—you take them in your arms, and what is there but the dream? You kiss them on the painted red lips, and even the dream is gone. One like another."

"But me, my dear? What did you find in me?" This was a new Esteban, here against his own background—rather a startling one.

He turned and looked at her tenderly. "A need," he said; "a need of help—little white butterfly buffeting the wind with its wings."

His insight chagrined her—she who had thought herself condescending to his simplicity! She caught at his arm. "It's true, Esteban. I do need help. I'm so tired of—buffeting the wind. Oh, hold me! Try to hold me if you can."

His hand closed over hers. "I shall hold you," he promised.

As they neared the house, he in turn asked a question—his first, yet it showed her that he knew far more of her affairs than she of his.

"That lady whom you sometimes call 'mamma' was the *wife* of your father?"

"Of course!" Emily flushed a little. He had put it oddly.

Suttee: a Hindoo custom requiring a widow to commit suicide.

"And before that she was married to another man—who still lives?"

"Yes"—fortunately enough, Emily thought, since that gentleman's generous alimony formed a large part of their income.

"We shall not speak of this to my grandmother," he suggested quietly. "In all respects, Basques are not adaptable. There is no word in our language," he added with his terrible simplicity, "for adultery."

They had reached the doorway, from which a young woman in a black mantilla stepped out to them. "You are late, Esteban. *La madre* has been long expecting you," she said in a tone of reproof; but how her eyes smoldered as she looked at him! She turned to Emily with the light dying out, and said politely, "Enter, mademoiselle. You are welcome."

That night, alone in an enormous room with a high square bed in each of the four corners—fortunately there happened to be no other guests to share the Urruty hospitality at the moment—Emily tried to fix the impressions of the day on her memory. There was a curious mixture in her mind of peace with perturbation, strangeness with a blessed familiarity, as if she had come home—she who knew no home; as if this ancient hacienda in the hills, shelter to many generations of a people utterly foreign to her, were her shelter too, her stem house. Perhaps—and the thought thrilled while it startled her—it meant that this home of Esteban's was to be the home of Urruty yet to come who would be her children, her children's children.

She shook the thought away, tried to wake from it as from a nightmare. What was she dreaming of?—she, Emily Weldon, marrying into a family of peasants! Even Esteban, with his promise to hold her—or was it a threat?—could not make her commit such a folly as that.

The *etcheonda* in which he took such pride had been disappointing on closer inspection. Picturesque, yes; but primitive to an appalling degree. The fine arch of the entrance led into nothing

La madre: The mother.

more than a cobbled runway to the stable yard beyond, where manure was more than evident. There were horses stabled in the house itself, beneath the room where she lay. Opposite the stalls, they had entered a sort of hall or entrance chamber of great size, but without furniture. Farm implements and harness seemed to be stored there. Inside the door she had noticed a long row of high-peaked wooden sabots, like those worn by Stancia, who added her own to the rest.

"Here our people thresh grain and hold the harvest feasts," Esteban told her. "A fine floor for the dance, eh, Stancia?" He put an affectionate arm about his sister-in-law, from which the young widow visibly shrank. "You should see this Stancia in the *farandole!* She used to be the prettiest dancer in the valleys. Ah, but you shall see her—at our wedding." He seemed unconscious of cruelty, in his boyish happiness to have brought the woman he loved into the home he loved.

From this bleak hall a flight of worn stone stairs led to chambers above, where Emily glimpsed something of the treasures often hidden in these old hill homes of a seafaring, pirate people. Tall *armoires,* rich with dim gold and red and blue; great carved chests, chairs of stamped Spanish leather, faded arras and soft-toned threadbare velvets against the plastered wall; intermingled with highly colored modern lithographs of saints and martyrs.

But Stancia, giving her barely time to make herself neat, hurried her down to the supper table.

"*La madre* is waiting," she said, as if it were sufficient explanation of any haste.

The room into which Emily was led appeared to be a kitchen, a stone-flagged chamber of great size, with two large chimneys, in one of which she noted the anachronism of a modern iron cook-stove. Vessels of brass and copper gleamed fitfully, festoons of dried peppers and garlic hung from the beams, a long narrow table

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Sabots: wooden shoes.
Farandole: a dance.
Armoires: cupboards.

was covered at one end with a red damask cloth, and about it people sat eating.

But to Emily everything in the room was dwarfed in interest by the woman at the head of the table—not a large figure, but one of great dignity: white hair brushed straight up from a dark wrinkled face more Oriental than Spanish in type, with the flat features, high cheek bones and serene immobility of an ancient Buddha. Only the eyes were not old. They flashed with interest, vitality, surprising youth. Without rising, she motioned Emily courteously to a seat at her right hand, beside Esteban, who stood awaiting her.

Opposite, his father also stood waiting, a soldierly looking man with an empty sleeve pinned across his blouse, who bowed stiffly but with a shy quick smile for her, like Esteban's. This was Pedro Urruty, who bore apparently no ill will to the mother who had deposed him in favor of his son as heir. Beside him sat the fat young wife from Béarn; and there were several children, all girls. At the far end of the table, beyond the damask cloth, were other men and women, who made no attempt to rise or to greet her, merely stared and swallowed and stared again. These were evidently farm laborers. There was no service of any sort. People helped themselves at will out of dishes on the table. Now and then the daughter-in-law, Stancia, apparently the cook, replenished these with food hot from the stove.

It was a strangely patriarchal scene, impressive in its simplicity. Emily felt as if she had stepped into the pages of the Old Testament. They spoke little to one another, and to her not at all; yet she felt no embarrassment, since they seemed to feel none. The business of the moment was obviously to eat. At the end of the meal, Stancia handed the matriarch a large vessel of pewter shaped like the pottery water *cruches* to be found anywhere in the South of France, with a handle and a spout.

"It is the *pourru*. They drink the *régalade* in our honor!" whispered Esteban to Emily, evidently much pleased. It passed

Régalade: a ceremonious drinking.

from hand to hand down the table. Each drinker lifted the vessel above his head and inclined it so that the liquid streamed into his mouth, without touching the spout with the lips. Emily gathered that this was a point of etiquette rather than of sanitation, and was able by the time the *pourru* came to her hands to drink in the same manner, without spilling a drop. For the first time the old woman smiled.

"This girl is quick. We shall make of her a good little Basquaise!" she remarked to Esteban; but she spoke in French, and Emily was evidently expected to hear.

Then Pedro Urruty made a sign, and suddenly every man at the table sprang to his feet with a high wild shout, as startling as a Confederate rebel yell or a Highland clan call.

"It is the *irrezina,* our battle cry," explained Esteban, his eyes shining. "These men have fought with us." He put his hand up in a brief military salute of acknowledgment.

Emily was oddly moved by the little ceremony. So might a young lord of feudal days have been greeted by his vassals. She did not mind the frank questioning that followed; it seemed quite in keeping.

What, inquired the old woman briefly, was the amount of her dot? Mr. Weldon, who knew his Europe, had fortunately been able to lay aside a modest sum for this purpose, which the amiable generosity of Suzanne had left so far unimpaired. Emily mentioned it.

"It should buy you those meadows from the Etcheverray," remarked the old woman casually to her grandson. And mademoiselle was orphaned? In that case, who was empowered to arrange her marriage?

Emily explained that in America young women sometimes performed this service for themselves. The matriarch glanced at Esteban for corroboration. He nodded. *"C'est l'habitude, ma mère."*

C'est l'habitude, ma mère. It is the custom, mother.

The Americans, remarked Madame Urruty, were still *un peu sauvage,* then? However, one had heard they were a virtuous people. And mademoiselle's religious faith?

She seemed very little disturbed when Emily admitted that she had none in particular.

"Eh, well, these things arrange themselves," she commented indifferently. "That is an affair of the priests. A loving and obedient young wife—there should be little difficulty." She shrugged. Perhaps Esteban had already hinted that his fiancée might prove adaptable.

Then, somewhat to Emily's dismay, the old woman had come to her and kissed her, ceremoniously but very kindly, on each cheek. Pedro Urruty did likewise, followed by everyone at the table except the farm servants, who continued to stare and masticate. And so Emily, the beautiful Miss Weldon of the fashion sheets, found herself accepted as the affianced bride of a Basque hill farmer, shut off behind the Pyrenees from the far-away, vague, unreal world she had left only that morning.

She lay there listening, quivering to the thought that she was at last under the same roof with her lover. Through open windows, a breath of the near-by snow fields stirred the heavy woolen curtains of the bed, mingled with a delicious fragrance from the beehives in the courtyard. Esteban had shown them to her, gay little houses painted in colors like flowers, his grandmother's pride.

"There are no such bees as the bees of our valley," he said. "*La madre's* hydromel is famous throughout the Basses-Pyrénées. You do not know hydromel? It is the honey wine; in England they call it mead."

She was aware, lying there, of many unaccustomed sounds; always the faint, far tinkle of herd bells, the whisper of rushing water; below her, in their stalls, the munching and moving of drowsy beasts. Presently voices from the next room became audible

Un peu sauvage: somewhat savage.

in the stillness—high voices of little girls, with now and then a deeper note. Apparently the family of Pedro Urruty were talking her over from their beds, chiefly in French for the benefit of the Béarnaise mother, though there were phrases of Spanish and Basque also—the household seemed to be trilingual.

"But how white, *maman,* how white her skin! And such little, little feet, like a princess. Silk stockings on them——"

"And silk lingerie also; I have seen it when she crossed the knees."

"But certainly, that was easy," mocked the older voice. "Crossing the knees! Fine behavior for your princess, *hein?* Such a useful wife she will make in the house! Not only the feet are ridiculous but the whole person. What breasts, what hips! *Il n'y a rien du tout.* Esteban would have done better to take Stancia, who is mad for him. Do you notice, my Pedro, how she could not keep from touching him at the table, the poor girl? What sort of children will this one bear him, I ask you—pygmies?"

"Would you have her bear him—pigs?" It was the masculine murmur of Esteban's father to the rescue. "True, there is less of her than of yourself, my angel, which is to be regretted; but, in the end, it is livestock we select for the weight, rather than wives."

Emily smiled into her pillow. Evidently she had a strong ally in the elder Urruty. But, of course, the woman was right. What was she doing in such a place? There must be only another day of it.

She sighed, and fell asleep at last; to be startled half awake by a hand trying her door, softly opening it.

"Esteban!" she whispered into the darkness.

A woman's voice replied dryly, "No, it is not Esteban. I bring the little *déjeuner. La madre* suggests that if mademoiselle would

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Maman: mamma.
Hein? hey?
Il n'y a rien du tout. There is nothing at all.
Déjeuner: breakfast.

dress quickly —— We go to the mass early, since there is still hay to be stacked."

III

Chagrined and resentful, Emily sipped the thick hot chocolate Stancia had brought her, spiced with cinnamon, and nibbled at a sweet cake which she wished had been a roll. Mass, at such an hour—or at any hour, for that matter!

It was broad daylight when she was wakened at last by four eyes gazing fixedly at her, two belonging to a large dog and two to a very small girl.

"Myself, I am Bette," said the little girl, when she was sure of complete attention, "and this one is Nagarro. We have been left to guard you. We are doing so."

The rest of the household, it appeared, had gone to mass. She, being of a responsible nature, had been given the position of trust.

"But Esteban?" asked Emily. "Where is he?"

"Also at mass. *La madre* wished for his company."

Emily began to be thoroughly out of patience with this matriarchate. To be left, on her last day with Esteban, to the company of a child!

The glamour of her adventure suddenly palled. An idea came to her of getting away without the necessity of farewells. She would take the automobile that had brought them, and leave before the household returned—unless Esteban had already taken it.

But no, the responsible Bette assured her, it waited under a shed, hidden away from the brood mares, which must not be frightened at this season. She, Bette, had no such matronly fears; in fact, Esteban had promised to drive her in the automobile, if she succeeded in keeping mademoiselle well amused during his absence. Therefore she had prepared quite a program of entertainment. First, they would inspect the poultry yard, her especial charge; then by natural progression the pigsties and the dovecot; next the dairy, and the looms where the winter's cloth was weaving. Was made-

moiselle a friend of bees? Otherwise they might resent intrusion, Mademoiselle was not? A pity! But at least she should see the children who had been born to Gathid recently under the brew house.

"Who," asked Emily, "is Gathid?"

"Gathid? But she is as always the house cat, mademoiselle! And surely of an age to know better. However, if they were kept a secret, *la madre* would not be able to have her children drowned as usual in the water butt. Cats were, of course, creatures of the devil; and *la madre* felt that one Gathid was sufficient to represent the devil in any household.

Here, thought Emily, was a people who took no chances—they went to mass, but they managed to keep also on neighborly terms with the devil. On further consideration she decided to remain and see what Bette had to offer. She had never known any children except of the unnatural hotel variety; and there was something about this little future matriarch that caught her fancy, reminded her disarmingly of Esteban, in a smaller and fatter manifestation.

She was almost sorry when they saw the household returning from mass; quite a cavalcade, the men riding mules or horses, the women in a large white-hooded *tartane,* all except the matriarch, a stately old figure in her voluminous black cape and thimble-shaped hat, who rode a tall, spirited horse, mounted sidewise on a Spanish saddle with a shelf for the feet. The other women had black scarfs over their heads, and Stancia carried a tall brass candlestick tied in crêpe.

"See, she has burned another candle for her husband, who is dead," commented the informative Bette. "Tante Stancia is very devout! She will enter religion if Esteban does not marry her, perhaps."

Emily felt sudden pity for the woman Esteban did not love.

He came to her, running like a boy. "To see you waiting so

Tartane: a two-wheeled hooded cart.
Tante: Aunt.

at the door of my house—what happiness! And you have made friends with the little sister? You have not been bored?"

"Not for a moment," she said with truth. "But she has made me feel ignorant, Esteban, and singularly useless."

He smiled tenderly. "Ah, you will not feel useless long, my Emilie! *La madre* will soon find something for you to do—there! You see?"

"Esteban! My son!" It was the matriarch's stern voice calling. "Why do you two idle there? Do you forget the hay?"

He smote himself reproachfully on the brow and hurried away, calling out orders.

This was rather more than Emily had bargained for. "Surely, madame," she protested, "you do not work in your fields on Sunday?"

"Why not?" The old woman's eyes twinkled. "They are good Catholic fields, blessed yearly with the embers of Saint Jean. And the rain, my child, is no respecter of holidays—look where clouds gather about La Rhune." She pointed toward the somber peak that broods over the range to the west, and raised her voice: *"Vite, vite,* Pedro, Bette, all of you! The rakes, and make haste! We eat no more today until the hay is up."

There seemed nothing for Emily to do but to follow down to the fields. The children made a great business of finding her sabots small enough, a wide hat to protect her beautiful whiteness. She asked for a rake as well.

"But you, mademoiselle, who are still a guest? *La madre* will not expect it of you," they protested; delighted nevertheless. They led her in triumph to the meadows, where the entire household were at work, Esteban leading the others, directing, helping, everywhere at once, in a short peasant smock and a scarlet handkerchief tied over his head to keep the sweat out of his eyes. He stared with pleasure at Emily's appearance, but did not pause.

"So you have learned already that in a Basque family every member is useful?" he cried as he passed.

Vite, vite: Quick, quick!

The matriarch, pitchfork in hand, was giving orders like a general on a battlefield; encouraging, speeding up her forces, herself setting a stout example, gray head bare to the sun, full black Sunday skirts turned up over a white starched petticoat. Everybody was at it, women and children raking, piling up the carts, men staggering about like miniature haystacks, invisible beneath the loads piled high on their shoulders, on forklike *porte-foins.* In the west new clouds rode the wind like great white galleons.

"Vite, vite, my little ones!" came now and again the high carrying call of the matriarch.

Emily had caught the contagion and worked with the rest, worked till blisters broke on her hands, and her back ached furiously, and her breath came hard. It was partly anger that spurred her; this old woman and the others, they should see that she was not so useless as she looked; that there was plenty of strength in her "ridiculous" body; that the sword, when it chooses, makes as good a bread knife as another. Meanwhile she found this mad race with the elements more exciting than any sport she had tried. She heard herself singing. When she paused once to put the hair out of her eyes, she caught the matriarch's amused glance.

"Ça va," said the old woman briefly. "We shall win."

Suddenly it was upon them, not with a few first drops of warning, but like a cloudburst, a deluge: one of the terrible rainstorms of the Pyrenees.

"We have done!" came a ringing shout from Esteban, and laughing joyously, he swung Emily up into his arms and ran with her to shelter under the pelting torrent.

A fine fire roared in the kitchen, where Stancia, who alone had not gone to the haying, was putting food on the table: a soup savory with herbs, fowls stuffed with *choucroute,* a salad of crisp cresses, omelets blazing with rum.

"And because you have been such good children——" The ma-

Porte-foins: hay-carriers.
Ça va: We are making progress.
Choucroute: sauer-kraut.

triarch smiled mysteriously, rising, herself, to fetch a large brass-bound *ferrata* of wood, beaded with cool moisture, from which she filled mugs for everyone at the table, children included.

"Hydromel!" cried Esteban. "There is no better in the *Pays Basque,* in the world. Drink, my Emilie! It is safer for woman heads than the Yzarra."

The girl thought she had never tasted food or drink so exquisite. What an art, if an unconscious art, they made of living! The cup in her hand was crude, but beaten out of silver so pure she could almost have bent it with her fingers. The great stone-flagged room shone with cleanliness, danced with firelight that turned brasses and coppers into molten gold. Outside, the rain thundered down the steep slates of the roof, poured across the windows in cataracts. At this meal everybody talked and laughed together with new freedom, even the laborers, relaxed by the consciousness of work well shared. Under the table, Esteban's hand found hers.

"You are content?" he whispered.

She replied simply, "I have never been so happy in my life!" She spoke in English, but the old woman smiled at her as if she understood.

"Certainly she understands—my grandmother understands any language she chooses! She was educated at the best convent in Spain. And today, my Emilie, you have won her heart—you will see!"

The matriarch beckoned Emily and the other women, later, to follow her upstairs; men were evidently not expected. She led them into a room furnished with one bed, a *prie-Dieu,* a single chair —evidently her own Spartan chamber; but there were several *armoires* and chests against the walls, before one of which she stopped. She handed Stancia a key. "Open," she said.

The young widow did so with evident reluctance. The contents made Emily catch her breath—linens like yellowed silk, laced and

Pays Basque: Basque country.
Prie-Dieu: praying desk.

embroidered; lengths of uncut brocade and velvet, rolls of cobweb filet.

"You like these things?" said the matriarch carelessly. "They are for you."

"For me?"

At the girl's flush of embarrassed surprise, the other put a kindly hand on her shoulder. "For little orphans who are poor and have, perhaps, no trousseau, the good God sometimes provides. Lift out the rest, Stancia."

There were dresses made of beautiful materials in the elegance of many years past: décolleté, with court trains. "As you see, this is not the trousseau of a Basquaise," remarked the matriarch. "It belonged to my first *belle-fille*—petite like you, and also of the world. Men of this house," she added, "do not necessarily take wives out of their own valley. The Urruty range far afield."

Stancia continued stoically to lift treasures out of the chest for Emily's inspection—small square-toed slippers, jewel boxes, fans, plumes. At the bottom was a tray of little filmy garments, stiff with needlework—tiny dresses, jackets, petticoats, bibs. The little girls clapped ecstatic hands.

"For the *bébé!* Oh, see, mademoiselle! For the first *bébé!*"

Emily had gone quite pale and silent. She began to realize what she had done in deceiving Esteban, in deceiving this old woman who so trusted and honored her. For the first time in her life, perhaps, she was ashamed. "Madame is too kind!" she muttered with stiff lips. "I can't—it is not possible——"

The matriarch took her hand reassuringly. "Your hesitation does you credit, my child. But remember the gift is not from Esteban, your fiancé; nor from myself, a stranger, since these things are not mine to give. They come to you from Esteban's mother, now with God, who thus provides for her little *belle-fille* a suitable trousseau."

There were rare tears in her eyes, tears suddenly in Emily's throat. She remembered that the stern old Spartan had loved this

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Belle-fille: daughter-in-law.
Bébé: baby.

daughter-in-law better than her own children, because she was small and delicate and rare, Esteban had said, like herself.

Small and delicate and rare! Then what had she done in such a place, such a life as this? The answer was obvious: She had died of it! Died very young, at the birth of her second child, who was Esteban.

Unreasoning panic overtook Emily, a reaction from the emotions of the day. She must get away at once, instantly, before it was too late. . . . Too late? They could hardly force her to marry against her will—the matriarch, Esteban who had sworn to hold her? Nonsense!

But she must make them angry enough not to want to keep her; so angry that Esteban would not be hurt. Despite her panic, it was still of importance that Esteban should not be hurt. She had meant to go quietly away without undeceiving them, so that they should know the truth gradually; but this trust, this generosity, had made such a course impossible. There was more decency in the girl than she knew.

She must give them a reason for not marrying Esteban; a reason that they could understand and accept. She could hardly say to the man in his own house, "My dear fellow, I'd no more think of marrying a picturesque Basque peasant than I'd think of marrying a prosperous Greek bootblack!"

For a moment the fact that she was not Catholic suggested a loophole of escape; but they had accepted this already without demur, expecting her to be adaptable. Suddenly the idea came. Divorce! That was the thing these people would not tolerate; laxity of the marriage laws.

She said, not very steadily, "Perhaps, madame, I should not accept your kindness, your hospitality, without making a confession. I am not altogether what you think; not—a young girl."

Madame Urruty drew back. "You mean you have been married? You are a widow?"

Emily's hand went to her throat. It was harder than she had thought. "Not—exactly. My husband and I—are not together.

In America"—she smiled rather desperately—"we have, as you perhaps know, the custom of divorce."

The old woman's face stiffened. With a stern gesture she dismissed the others from the room. "Send me Esteban," she said.

They went reluctantly, Stancia with a queer backward look of triumph.

"She will get him now," flashed miserably across Emily's mind. She heard him running up the stairs. He paused on the threshold, then came to her and took her hand in a strong clasp.

"What is this, *ma mère?*" His eyes were as stern as the old woman's. "What are you saying to trouble our guest?"

"How does it happen that we have such a guest?" demanded the old woman in measured tones. "How does it happen that my son's son brings into our house a woman who is wife to another man?"

"Divorced wife," corrected Emily faintly.

"How have you dared?" said the old woman, as if she had not spoken.

Emily made a final effort. "He did not know—he never asked. Oh, let me go!" she sobbed, and jerked her hand from Esteban's.

She heard him following as she ran along the corridor. He overtook her, seized her shoulder roughly, jerked her about to face him. "This—this is not true?" She could not speak for sobbing, but she saw the blazing anger die gradually out of his face. "No, it is not true," he answered himself. "It is to my grandmother you have lied. But why? Because you do not wish to marry me?" Emily nodded helplessly. "So, the test was too great," he muttered, still to himself. "Or perhaps you never wished to marry me?"

Emily could only shake her head.

"But why?" he repeated again. "Why have you done this to me? You love me?"

She found her voice at last. "Oh, my dear, can't you see—can't you see how absurd it was to expect a woman like me to live such a life as this—a life that killed your own mother?" Esteban winced.

Ma mère: mother.

"Oh, I did not wish to say that! But think of me, me, Emily Weldon, living among the cattle, hoeing the fields, handling—handling manure, for all I know! There's enough of it about." She laughed hysterically. "I'm not a woman like your grandmother or Stancia—I'm a lady!"

"What," he asked oddly, "is a lady?"

She laughed again. "You see? You don't even know the difference! Should I have to cook meals for the farm hands? Why, I've never done a useful thing in my life, and never shall. It's impossible, ridiculous! Girls like me are brought up to be useless. We must marry rich men, my dear—rich, can you understand? As my world counts riches, not as a peasant does, who prides himself on how many cows he keeps, or pigs! Motor cars, country houses, yachts—my own or other people's—those things are necessities to me——"

"More than love?" he interrupted.

"I'm not fool enough to expect everything at once—but love is so cheap! You can find that as you need it, Esteban. . . . Oh, don't! You're hurting me!"

He thought she meant the hand on her shoulder, and took it away; but she meant his eyes. "Yes"—he had to moisten his lips to speak—"I suppose I have been—ridiculous."

"No, no, not you!" She had been crueler in her hysteria than necessary. "I don't mean that *our* love is cheap! . . . This patriarchal, pastoral, humble sort of life—I am not fitted for that sort of thing. It—it is too real for me! I am not good enough, perhaps——"

Her voice trailed away before the weariness in his eyes, the sudden disillusionment. She had accomplished her purpose only too well.

"No," he said after a moment, "I see you are not good enough." And he went heavily away.

Presently, lying face downward on her bed, she ceased to sob and began to listen for him. He would return, of course; they could not part like this! The rain had passed as suddenly as it

came, and released fragrance from the contented earth blew in across her fevered thoughts, soothing, suggesting. The light that presaged dusk was mystically clear and serene. From without came homely sounds which are the same in any language—lowing of cows, the call of the child Bette to her chickens.

Emily's own words were in her ears. Yes, this life was real; the life of human beings on the earth since Adam. All that had gone before was empty, anxious dreaming. Why go back to it? There was nothing worth going back to. Something had happened to Emily. She was no longer a lady; only a woman, waiting —Esteban's woman. When he returned to her, she would know better how to make her little sacrifice to love. But he did not return.

"Then I must go to him," she said aloud. Had she been mad—was she mad now? Who cared? She knew suddenly that no price was too high to pay for this sense of belonging to life, this hold on reality; even the price of marriage, of personal extinction.

She dried her eyes and dabbed powder over her face. With a little laugh, in a magnificent gesture of renunciation she flung her powder puff out to the birds and bees.

It was then that she saw Esteban going down towards the woods, still moving heavily, with bowed head; but not alone. His arm was about the waist of the sister-in-law, who no longer shrank from it. She leaned against him as they walked, turning up to his a face eager with tenderness. Stancia, whose love had tempted him; Stancia the comforter ——

"So be it," said the girl; and something within her, some larger thing that had come into her heart with Esteban, was glad.

The details of her return to Biarritz were always vague to Emily. At the village where she had lunched with Esteban a motor lorry of tourists had paused for refreshment. She left the rented automobile—her rather odd education had included the driving of other people's cars—for Esteban to find when he followed her, and went on with the tourists.

"Sure, lady—always room for a pretty girl!" This friendly

gallantry, in the accents of her native land, stayed in her mind, together with the steady pounding of the lorry, mile after mile, as she listened backward, listened despairingly, for Esteban to follow.

It was late at night when she reached the hotel and found in the drawing-room of the suite she shared with her stepmother a little entertainment going on, over a bottle of champagne. Monsieur Duval, Suzanne explained in some embarrassment, had stopped for a moment, merely, to discuss certain plans for the next day.

"Plans," suggested Emily grimly, "for our departure tomorrow?" And Suzanne, with a scared glance at her stepdaughter's face, had agreed that this was so.

The departure had been less immediate, of course; there were boxes to pack, arrangements to effect; but on an evening some days later Emily stood alone on the terrace, looking for the last time over the Bay of Biscay, exquisite under the moon she had shared with Esteban—"the light of the dead," as Basques call it.

It was all to begin over again, the old aimless wandering, the search for something which perhaps did not exist: her place in life, something to take the place of love.

As she gazed, a boat as graceful as a cat slipped out into the moon mist toward the open sea. It was a boat she had noted once in the lower town, the last of the smart steam yachts to leave after the Biarritz season.

"Ah!" murmured the voice of the director at her elbow. "Mademoiselle is admiring the *Gathid,* off for America again? One heard that she had been put into commission for a honeymoon. Romantic, *n'est-ce pas?* Mademoiselle would perhaps like to be on that pretty boat?"

"Not," she replied listlessly, "if it is going to America." Then the name struck her, brought a sharp picture of a little fat girl with kittens in her arms. "The *Gathid*—but that is a Basque name!"

"Assuredly. And a Basque boat," assented the director pleasantly. "Built for a man who knows boats—the young Urruty."

N'est-ce pas? is it not?

"Urruty ——" Emily put a hand to her throat.

"But yes, the *pelota* player, a great sportsman—you have doubtless heard of him? Ah, I recall that mademoiselle was asking me about a family of that name some time since. I should have remembered to tell you of Esteban. But he is so rarely here. Often one finds surprising wealth among these people; but this one appears to have outdone himself—a gold mine, I think, or perhaps an oil well. Something fabulous of the sort, in the Americas. And how unspoiled, how filial! Always returning at this season because of the haying, to help with the work of the farm! A charming gesture, is it not? No wonder our young ladies and their mammas excite themselves over his visits. And now it is too late; there has been a marriage, one hears—a family marriage. Such a pity," he murmured gently, "that mademoiselle herself could not have made the acquaintance of this delightful fellow. But what have you? What is the matter here?"

For Emily had begun to laugh; laughed and laughed and could not stop, though she dug her nails into her palms, stuck a handkerchief into her mouth and bit it; laughed until Monsieur Duval in some alarm ran to get her a glass of *eau-de-vie*—which appeared in due time upon the bill, with a franc charged extra for service.

Eau-de-vie: brandy.

MISS HINCH

By

HENRY SYDNOR HARRISON

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The master detective is one whose mental processes are never distorted by feeling. In this respect he is superior to the average criminal, whose mistakes are as likely to result from uncontrolled impulse as from lack of intelligence. It is a rare criminal whose brain is keen and who can keep his feelings under control. Mr. Harrison shows us a struggle between a master detective and a super-criminal, and they are both women.

HENRY SYDNOR HARRISON was born of Virginian parentage in Sewanee, Tennessee, the seat of the University of the South, where his father, Dr. Caskie Harrison, was then Professor of Classics. As a boy he attended the Brooklyn Latin School, founded by his father, and later graduated from Columbia University.

In the first year of the Great War Mr. Harrison served with the American Ambulance in France and Belgium. From November, 1917, to February, 1919, he was an officer in the United States Naval Reserve Force.

As a writer, Mr. Harrison is best known for his novels. Among his works are *Queed, V.V.'s Eyes, Angela's Business, Saint Teresa, Andrew Bride of Paris,* and *When I Come Back,* the last a memoir of his brother, who was killed in the Argonne.

MISS HINCH

By Henry Sydnor Harrison

IN GOING from a given point on 126th Street to a subway station at 125th, it is not usual to begin by circling the block to 127th Street, especially in sleet, darkness, and deadly cold. When two people pursue such a course at the same time, moving unobtrusively on opposite sides of the street, in the nature of things the coincidence is likely to attract the attention of one or the other of them.

In the bright light of the entrance to the tube they came almost face to face, and the clergyman took a good look at her. Certainly she was a decent-looking old body, if any woman was: white-haired, wrinkled, spectacled, and stooped. A poor but thoroughly respectable domestic servant of the better class she looked, in her old black hat, neat veil, and gray shawl; and her brief glance at the reverend gentleman was precisely what it should have been from her to him —open deference itself. Nevertheless, he, going more slowly down the draughty steps, continued to study her from behind with singular intentness.

An express was just thundering in, which the clergyman, handicapped as he was by his clubfoot and stout cane, was barely in time to catch. He entered the same car with the woman, and chanced to take a seat directly across from her. It must have been then after twelve o'clock, and the wildness of the weather was discouraging to travel. The car was almost deserted. Even in this underground retreat the bitter breath of the night blew and bit, and the old woman shivered under her shawl. At last, her teeth chattering, she got up in an apologetic sort of way, and moved toward the better protected rear of the car, feeling the empty seats as she went, in palpable search for hot pipes. The clergyman's eyes fol-

lowed her candidly, and watched her sink down, presently, into a seat on his own side of the car. A young couple sat between them now; he could no longer see the woman, beyond occasional glimpses of her black knees and her faded bonnet, fastened on with a long steel hatpin.

Nothing could have seemed more natural or more trivial than this change of seats on the part of a thin-blooded and half-frozen passenger. But it happened to be a time of mutual doubt and misgivings, of alert suspicions and hair-trigger watchfulness, when men looked askance into every strange face and the smallest incidents were likely to take on a hysterical importance. Through days of fruitless searching for a fugitive outlaw of extraordinary gifts, the nerve of the city had been slowly strained to the breaking-point. All jumped, now, when anybody cried "Boo!" and the hue and cry went up falsely twenty times a day.

The clergyman pondered; mechanically he turned up his coat collar and fell to stamping his icy feet. He was an Episcopal clergyman, by his garb—rather short, very full-bodied, not to say fat, bearded and somewhat puffy-faced, with heavy cheeks cut by deep creases. Well lined against the cold though he was, however, he, too, began to suffer visibly, and presently was forced to retreat in his turn, seeking out a new place where the heating apparatus gave a better account of itself. He found one, two seats beyond the old serving-woman, limped into it, and soon relapsed into his own thoughts.

The young couple, now half a dozen seats away, were thoroughly absorbed in each other's society. The fifth traveler, a withered old gentleman sitting next the middle door across the aisle, napped fitfully upon his cane. The woman in the hat and shawl sat in a sad kind of silence; and the train hurled itself roaringly through the tube. After a time, she glanced timidly at the meditating clergyman, and her look fell swiftly from his face to the discarded "ten-o'clock extra" lying by his side. She removed her dim gaze and let it travel casually about the car; but before long

it returned, pointedly, to the newspaper. Then, with some hesitation, she bent forward and said, above the noises of the train:

"Excuse me, father, but would you please let me look at your paper a minute, sir?"

The clergyman came out of his reverie instantly, and looked up with a quick smile.

"Certainly. Keep it if you like: I am quite through with it. But," he said, in a pleasant deep voice, "I am an Episcopal minister, not a priest."

"Oh, sir—I beg your pardon! I thought ——"

He dismissed the apology with a nod and a good-natured hand.

The woman opened the paper with decent cotton-gloved fingers. The garish head-lines told the story at a glance: "Earth Opened and Swallowed Miss Hinch—Headquarters Virtually Abandons Case—Even Jessie Dark"—so the bold capitals ran on—"Seems Stumped." Below the spread was a luridly written but flimsy narrative, "By Jessie Dark," which at once confirmed the odd implication of the caption. "Jessie Dark," it appeared, was one of those most extraordinary of the products of yellow journalism, a woman "crime expert," now in action. More than this, she was a "crime expert" to be taken seriously, it seemed—no mere office-desk sleuth, but an actual performer with, unexpectedly enough, a somewhat formidable list of notches on her gun. So much, at least, was to be gathered from her paper's display of "Jessie Dark's Triumphs":

March 2, 1901. Caught Julia Victorian, *alias* Gregory, the brains of the "Healey Ring" kidnappers.

October 7-29, 1903. Found Mrs. Trotwood and secured the letter that convicted her of the murder of her lover, Ellis E. Swan.

December 17, 1903. Ran down Charles Bartsch in a Newark laundry and trapped a confession from him.

July 4, 1904. Caught Mary Calloran and recovered the Stratford jewels.

And so on—nine "triumphs" in all; and nearly every one of them, as the least observant reader could hardly fail to notice, involved the capture of a woman.

Nevertheless, it could not be pretended that the "snappy" paragraphs in this evening's extra seemed to foreshadow a new or tenth triumph for Jessie Dark at an early date; and the old serving-woman in the car presently laid down the sheet with a look of marked depression.

The clergyman glanced at her again. Her expression was so speaking that it seemed to be almost an invitation; besides, public interest in the great case was a freemasonry that made conversation between total strangers the rule wherever two or three were gathered together.

"You were reading about this strange mystery, perhaps?"

The woman with a sharp intake of breath, answered: "Yes, sir. Oh, sir, it seems as if I couldn't think of anything else."

"Ah?" he said, without surprise. "It certainly appears to be a remarkable affair."

Remarkable indeed the affair seemed. In a tiny little room within ten steps of Broadway, at half past nine o'clock on a fine evening, Miss Hinch had killed John Catherwood with the light sword she used in her famous representation of the Father of his Country. Catherwood, it was known, had come to tell her of his coming marriage, and ten thousand amateur detectives, fired by unprecedented "rewards," had required no further motive of a creature already notorious for fierce jealousy. So far the tragedy was commonplace enough, and even vulgar. What had redeemed it to romance from this point on was the extraordinary faculty of the woman, which had made her celebrated while she was still in her teens. Coarse, violent, utterly unmoral she might be, but she happened also to be the most astonishing impersonator of her time. Her brilliant "act" consisted of a series of character changes, many of them done in full view of the audience with the assistance only of a small table of properties half concealed under a net. Some of these transformations were so amazing as to be beyond belief, even

after one had sat and watched them. Not her appearance only, but voice, speech, manner, carriage, all shifted incredibly to fit the new part; so that the woman appeared to have no permanent form or fashion of her own, but to be only so much plastic human material out of which her cunning could mould at will man, woman or child, great lady of the Louisan court or Tammany statesman with the modernest of East Side modernisms upon his lip.

With this strange skill, hitherto used only to enthrall large audiences and wring extortionate contracts from managers, the woman known as Miss Hinch—she appeared to be without a first name—was now fighting for her life somewhere against the police of the world. Without artifice, she was a tall, thin-chested young woman with strongly marked features and considerable beauty of a bold sort. What she would look like at the present moment nobody could venture a guess. Having stabbed John Catherwood in her dressing-room at the Amphitheater, she had put on her hat and coat, dropped two wigs and her make-up kit into a hand-bag, and walked out into Broadway. Within ten minutes the dead body of Catherwood was found and the chase begun. At the stage door, as she passed out, Miss Hinch had met an acquaintance, a young comedian named Dargis, and exchanged a word of greeting with him. That had been ten days ago. After Dargis, no one had seen her. The earth, indeed, seemed to have opened and swallowed her. Yet her natural features were almost as well known as a President's, and the newspapers of a continent were daily reprinting them in a thousand variations.

"A very remarkable case," repeated the clergyman, rather absently; and his neighbor, the old woman, respectfully agreed that it was. Then, as the train slowed for the stop at 86th Street, she added with sudden bitterness:

"Oh, they'll never catch her, sir—never! She's too smart for 'em all, Miss Hinch is."

Attracted by her tone, the stout divine inquired if she was particularly interested in the case.

"Yes, sir—I got reason to be. Jack Catherwood's mother and me

was at school together, and great friends all our life long. Oh, sir," she went on, as if in answer to his look of faint surprise, "Jack was a fine gentleman, with manners and looks and all beyond his people. But he never grew away from his old mother—no sir, never! And I don't believe ever a Sunday passed that he didn't go up and set the afternoon away with her, talking and laughing just like he was a little boy again. Maybe he done things he hadn't ought, as high-spirited lads will, but oh, sir, he was a good boy in his heart—a good boy. And it does seem too hard for him to die like that—and that hussy free to go her way, ruinin' and killin' ——"

"My good woman," said the clergyman presently, "compose yourself. No matter how diabolical this woman's skill is, her sin will assuredly find her out."

The woman dutifully lowered her handkerchief and tried to compose herself, as bidden.

"But oh, she's that clever—diabolical, just as ye say, sir. Through poor Jack we of course heard much gossip about her, and they do say that her best tricks was not done on the stage at all. They say, sir, that, sittin' around a table with her friends, she could begin and twist her face so strange and terrible that they would beg her to stop, and jump up and run from the table—frightened out of their lives, sir, grown-up people, by the terrible faces she could make. And let her only step behind her screen for a minute—for she kept her secrets well, Miss Hinch did—and she'd come walking out to you, and you could go right up to her in the full light and take her hand, and still you couldn't make yourself believe that it was her."

"Yes," said the clergyman, "I have heard that she is remarkably clever—though, as a stranger in this part of the world, I never saw her act. I must say, it is all very interesting and strange."

He turned his head and stared through the rear door of the car at the dark flying walls. At the same moment the woman turned her head and stared full at the clergyman. When the train

halted again, just outside of Grand Central Station, he turned back to her.

"I'm a visitor in the city, from Denver, Colorado," he said pleasantly, " and knew little or nothing about the case until an evening or two ago, when I attended a meeting of gentlemen here. The men's club of St. Matthias' Church—perhaps you know the place? Upon my word, they talked of nothing else. I confess they got me quite interested in their gossip. So to-night I bought this paper to see what this extraordinary woman detective it employs had to say about it. We don't have such things in the West, you know. But I must say I was disappointed, after all the talk about her."

"Yes, sir, indeed, and no wonder, for she's told Mrs. Catherwood herself that's she's never made such a failure as this so far. It seemed like she could always catch women, up to this. It seemed like she knew in her own mind just what a woman would do, where she'd try to hide and all, and so she could find them time and time when the men detectives didn't know where to look. But oh, sir, she's never had to hunt for such a woman as Miss Hinch before!"

"No? I suppose not," said the clergyman. "Her story here in the paper certainly seems to me very poor."

"Story, sir! Bless my soul!" suddenly exploded the old gentleman across the aisle, to the surprise of both. "You don't suppose the clever little woman is going to show her hand in those stories, with Miss Hinch in the city and reading every line of them! In the city, sir—such is my positive belief!"

The approach to his station, it seemed, had roused him from his nap just in time to overhear the episcopate criticism. Now he answered the looks of the old woman and the clergyman with an elderly cackle.

"Excuse my intrusion, I'm sure! But I can't sit silent and hear anybody run down Jessie Dark—Miss Matthewson in private life, as perhaps you don't know. No, sir! Why, there's a man at my boarding-place—astonishing young fellow named Hardy, Tom Hardy—who's known her for *years!* As to those stories, sir, I can

assure you that she puts in there *exactly the opposite of what she really thinks!"*

"You don't tell me!" said the clergyman encouragingly.

"Yes, sir! Oh, she plays the game—yes, yes! She has her private ideas, her clues, her schemes. The woman doesn't live who is clever enough to hoodwink Jessie Dark. I look for developments any day—any day, sir!"

A new voice joined in. The young couple down the car, their attention caught by the old man's pervasive tones, had been frankly listening; and it was illustrative of the public mind at the moment that, as they now rose for the station and drew nearer, the young man felt perfectly free to offer his contribution.

"Dramatic situation, isn't it, when you stop to think. Those two clever women pitted against each other in a life-and-death struggle, fighting it out silently in the underground somewhere—keen professional pride on one side and the fear of the electric chair on the other. Good heavens, there's——"

"Oh, yes! Oh, yes!" exclaimed the old gentleman rather testily. "But my dear sir, it's not *professional pride* that makes Jessie Dark so resolute to win. It's *sex jealousy,* if you follow me—no offense, madam! Yes, sir! Women never have the slightest respect for each other, either! I tell you, Jessie Dark'd be ashamed to be beaten by another woman. Read her stories between the lines, sir—as I do. Invincible determination—no weakening—no mercy! You catch my point, sir?"

"It sounds reasonable," answered the Colorado clergyman, with his courteous smile. "All women, we are told, are natural rivals at heart——"

"Oh, I'm for Jessie Dark every time!" the young fellow broke in eagerly—"especially since the police have practically laid down. But——"

"Why, she's told my young friend Hardy," the old gentleman rode him down, "that she'll find Hinch if it takes her lifetime! Knows a thing or two about actresses, she says. Says the world isn't

big enough for the creature to hide from her. Well! What do you think of that?"

"Tell what we were just talking about, George," said the young wife, looking at her husband with grossly admiring eyes.

"But oh, sir," began the old woman timidly, "Jack Catherwood's been dead ten days now, and—and——"

"Ten days, madam! And what is that, pray?" exploded the old gentlemen, rising triumphantly. "A lifetime, if necessary! Oh, never fear! Mrs. Victorian was considered pretty clever, eh? Wasn't she? Remember what Jessie Dark did for her? Nan Parmalee, too—though the police did their best to steal her credit. She'll do just as much for Miss Hinch—you may take it from me!"

"But how's she going to make the capture, gentlemen?" cried the young fellow, getting his chance at last. "That's the point my wife and I've been discussing. Assuming that she succeeds in spotting this woman-devil, what will she do? Now——"

"Do! Yell for the police!" burst from the old gentleman at the door.

"And have Miss Hinch shoot her—and then herself, too? Wouldn't she have to——"

"Grand Central!" cried the guard for the second time; and the young fellow broke off reluctantly to find his bride towing him strongly toward the door.

"Hope she nabs her soon, anyway," he called back to the clergyman over his shoulder. "The thing's getting on my nerves. One of these kindergarten reward-chasers followed my wife for five blocks the other day, just because she's got a pointed chin, and I don't know what might have happened if I hadn't come along and——"

Doors rolled shut behind him, and the train flung itself on its way. Within the car a lengthy silence ensued. The clergyman stared thoughtfully at the floor, and the old woman fell back upon her borrowed paper. She appeared to be re-reading the observations of Jessie Dark with considerable care. Presently she lowered the paper and began a quiet search for something under the folds of her

shawl; and at length, her hands emerging empty, she broke the silence in a lifted voice.

"Oh, sir—have you a pencil you could lend me, please? I'd like to mark something in the piece to send to Mrs. Catherwood. It's what she says here about the disguises, sir."

The kindly divine felt in his pockets, and after some hunting produced a pencil—a white one with blue lead. She thanked him gratefully.

"How is Mrs. Catherwood bearing all this strain and anxiety?" he asked suddenly. "Have you seen her to-day?"

"Oh, yes, sir. I've been spending the evening with her since nine o'clock, and am just back from there now. Oh, she's very much broke up, sir."

She looked at him uncertainly. He stared straight in front of him, saying nothing, though conceivably he knew, in common with the rest of the reading world, that Jack Catherwood's mother lived, not on 126th Street, but on East Houston Street. Possibly he might have wondered if his silence had not been an error of judgment. Perhaps that mis-statement had not been a slip, but something cleverer?

The woman went on with a certain eagerness: "Oh, sir, I only hope and pray those gentlemen may be right, but it does look to Mrs. Catherwood, and me too, that if Jessie Dark was going to catch her at all, she'd have done it before now. Look at those big, bold blue eyes she had, sir, with lashes an inch long, they say, and that terrible long chin of hers. They do say she can change the color of her eyes, not forever of course, but put a few of her drops into them and make them look entirely different for a time. But that chin, ye'd say——"

She broke off; for the clergyman, without preliminaries of any sort, had picked up his heavy stick and suddenly risen.

"Here we are at Fourteenth Street," he said, nodding pleasantly. "I must change here. Good night. Success to Jessie Dark, I say!"

He was watching the woman's faded face and he saw just that look of respectful surprise break into it that he had expected.

"Fourteenth Street! I'd no notion at all we'd come so far. It's where I get out too, sir, the expresses not stopping at my station."

"Ah?" said the clergyman, smiling a little.

He led the way, limping and leaning on his stick. They emerged upon the chill and cheerless platform, not exactly together, yet still with some reference to their acquaintanceship on the car. But the clergyman, after stumping along a few steps, all at once realized that he was walking alone, and turned. The woman had halted. Over the intervening space their eyes met.

"Come," said the man gently. "Come, let us walk about a little to keep warm."

"Oh, sir—it's too kind of you, sir," said the woman, coming forward.

From other cars two or three blue-nosed people had got off to make the change; one or two more came straggling in from the street; but, scattered over the bleak concrete expanse, they detracted little from the isolation that seemed to surround the woman and the clergyman. Step for step, the odd pair made their way to the extreme northern end of the platform.

"By the way," said the clergyman, halting abruptly, "may I see that paper again for a moment?"

"Oh, yes, sir—of course," said the woman, producing it from beneath her shawl. "I thought you had finished with it, and I——"

He said that he wanted only to glance at it for a moment; but he fell to looking through it page by page, with considerable care. The woman glanced at him several times. At last she said hesitatingly:

"I thought, sir, I'd ask the ticket-chopper could he say how long before the next train. I'm very late as it is, sir, and I still must stop to get something to eat before I go to bed."

"An excellent idea," said the clergyman.

He explained that he, too, was already an hour behind time, and was spending the night with cousins in Jersey, to boot. Side by side, they retraced their steps down the platform, questioned the chopper with scant results, and then, as by some tacit consent,

started slowly back again. However, before they had gone very far, the woman all at once stopped short and, with a white face, leaned against a pillar.

"Oh, sir, I'm afraid I'll just have to stop and get a bite somewhere before I go on. You'll think me foolish, sir, but I missed my supper entirely to-night, and there is quite a faint feeling coming over me."

The clergyman looked at her with apparent concern. "Do you know, my friend, you seem to anticipate all my own wants? Your mentioning something to eat just now reminded me that I myself was all but famishing." He glanced at his watch, appearing to deliberate. "Yes—it will not take long. Come, we will find a modest eating-house together."

"Oh, sir," she stammered, "but—you wouldn't want to eat with a poor old woman like me, sir."

"And why not? Are we not all equal in the sight of God?"

They ascended the stairs together, like any prosperous parson and his poor parishioner, and coming out into Fourteenth Street, started west. On the first block they came to a restaurant, a brilliantly lighted, tiled and polished place of the quick-lunch variety. But the woman timidly preferred not to stop here, saying that the glare of such places was very bad for her old eyes. The divine accepted the objection as valid, without argument. Two blocks farther on they found on a corner a quieter resort, an unpretentious little haven which yet boasted a "Ladies' Entrance" down the side street.

They entered by the front door, and sat down at a table, facing each other. The woman read the menu through, and finally, after some embarrassed uncertainty, ordered poached eggs on toast. The clergyman ordered the same. The simple meal was soon despatched. Just as they were finishing it, the woman said apologetically:

"If you'll excuse me, sir—could I see the bill of fare a minute? I think I'd best take a little pot of tea to warm me up, if they do not charge too high."

"I haven't the bill of fare," said the clergyman.

They looked diligently for the cardboard strip, but it was nowhere to be seen. The waiter drew near.

"Yes, sir! I left it there on the table when I took the order."

"I'm sure I can't imagine what's become of it," repeated the clergyman, rather insistently.

He looked hard at the woman, and found that she was looking hard at him. Both pairs of eyes fell instantly.

The waiter brought another bill of fare; the woman ordered tea; the waiter came back with it. The clergyman paid for both orders with a bill that looked hard-earned.

The tea proved to be very hot: it could not be drunk down at a gulp. The clergyman, watching the woman sidewise as she sipped, seemed to grow more and more restless. His fingers drummed the tablecloth: he could hardly sit still. All at once he said: "What is that calling in the street? It sounds like newsboys."

The woman put her old head on one side and listened. "Yes, sir. There seems to be an extra out."

"Upon my word," he said, after a pause. "I believe I'll go get one. Good gracious! Crime is a very interesting thing, to be sure!"

He rose slowly, took down his shovel-hat from the hanger near him, and, grasping his heavy stick, limped to the door. Leaving it open behind him, much to the annoyance of the proprietor in the cashier's cage, he stood a moment in the little vestibule, looking up and down the street. Then he took a few slow steps eastward, beckoning with his hand as he went, and so passed out of sight of the woman at the table.

The eating-place was on the corner, and outside the clergyman paused for half a breath. North, east, south, and west he looked, and nowhere he found what his flying glance sought. He turned the corner into the darker cross-street, and began to walk, at first slowly, continually looking about him. Presently his pace quickened, quickened so that he no longer even stayed to use his stout cane. In another moment he was all but running, his club-foot

pounding the icy sidewalk heavily as he went. A newsboy thrust an extra under his very nose, and he did not even see it.

Far down the street, nearly two blocks away, a tall figure in a blue coat stood and stamped in the freezing sleet; and the hurrying divine sped straight toward him. But he did not get very near. For, as he passed the side entrance at the extreme rear of the restaurant, a departing guest dashed out so recklessly as to run full into him, stopping him dead.

Without looking at her, he knew who it was. In fact, he did not look at her at all, but turned his head hurriedly north and south, sweeping the dark street with a swift eye. But the old woman, having drawn back with a sharp exclamation as they collided, rushed breathlessly into apologies:

"Oh, sir—excuse me! A newsboy popped his head into the side door just after you went out, and I ran to him to get you the paper. But he got away too quick for me, sir, and so I——"

"Exactly," said the clergyman in his quiet deep voice. "That must have been the very boy I myself was after."

On the other side, two men had just turned into the street, well muffled against the night, talking cheerfully as they trudged along. Now the clergyman looked full at the woman, and she saw that there was a smile on his face.

"As he seems to have eluded us both, suppose we return to the subway?"

"Yes, sir; it's full time I——"

"The sidewalk is so slippery," he went on gently, "perhaps you had better take my arm."

Behind the pair in the dingy restaurant, the waiter came forward to shut the door, and lingered to discuss with the proprietor the sudden departure of his two patrons. However, the score had been paid with a liberal tip for service, so there was no especial complaint to make. After listening to some unfavorable comments on the ways of the clergy, the waiter returned to his table to set it in order.

On the floor in the carpeted aisle between tables lay a white piece of cardboard, which his familiar eye recognized as part of one

of his own bills of fare, face downward. He stooped and picked it up. On the back of it was some scribbling, made with a blue lead-pencil.

The handwriting was very loose and irregular, as if the writer had had his eyes elsewhere while he wrote, and it was with some difficulty that the waiter deciphered this message:

Miss Hinch 14th St. subway Get police quick

The waiter carried this curious document to the proprietor, who read it over a number of times. He was a dull man, and had a dull man's suspiciousness of a practical joke. However, after a good deal of irresolute discussion, he put on his overcoat and went out for a policeman. He turned west, and half way up the block met an elderly bluecoat trudging east. The policeman looked at the scribbling, and dismissed it profanely as a wag's foolishness of the sort that was bothering the life out of him a dozen times a day. He walked along with the proprietor, and as they drew near to the latter's place of business, both became aware of footsteps thudding nearer up the cross-street from the south. As they looked up, two young policemen, accompanied by a man in a uniform like a street-car conductor's, swept around the corner and dashed straight into the restaurant.

The first policeman and the proprietor ran in after them, and found them staring about rather vacantly. One of the arms of the law demanded if any suspicious characters had been seen about the place, and the dull proprietor said no. The officers, looking rather flat, explained their errand. It seemed that a few moments before, the third man, who was a ticket-chopper at the subway station, had found a mysterious message lying on the floor by his box. Whence it had come, how long it had lain there, he had not the slightest idea. However, there it was. The policeman exhibited a crumpled white scrap torn from a newspaper, on which was scrawled in blue pencil:

Miss Hinch Miller's Restaurant Get police quick

The first policeman, who was both the oldest and the fattest of the three, produced the message on the bill of fare, so utterly at odds with this. The dull proprietor, now bethinking himself, mentioned the clergyman and the old woman who had taken poached eggs and tea together, called for a second bill of fare, and departed so unexpectedly by different doors. The ticket-chopper recalled that he had seen the same pair at his station: they had come up, he remembered, and questioned him about trains. The three policemen were momentarily puzzled by this testimony. But it was soon plain to them that if either the woman or the clergyman really had any information about Miss Hinch—a highly improbable supposition in itself—they would never have stopped with peppering the neighborhood with silly little contradictory messages.

"They're a pair of old fools tryin' to have sport with the police, and I'd like to run them in for it," growled the fattest of the officers; and his was the general verdict.

The little conference broke up. The dull proprietor returned to his cage, the waiter to his table; the subway man departed on the run for his chopping box; the three policemen passed out into the bitter night. They walked together, grumbling, and their feet, perhaps by some subconscious impulse, turned eastward toward the subway. And in the middle of the next block a man came running up to them.

"Officer, look what I found on the sidewalk a minute ago. Read that scribble!"

He held up a white slab which proved to be part of a bill of fare from Miller's Restaurant. On the back of it the three peering officers saw, almost illegibly scrawled in blue pencil:

Police! Miss Hinch 14th St. subw

The hand trailed off on the *w* as though the writer had been suddenly interrupted. The fat policeman blasphemed and threatened arrests. But the second policeman, who was dark and wiry, raised his head from the bill of fare and said suddenly: "Tim, I believe there's something in this."

"There'd ought to be ten days on the Island in it for thim," growled fat Tim.

"Suppose, now," said the other policeman, staring intently at nothing, "the old woman was Miss Hinch herself, f'r instance, and the parson was shadowing her while pretendin' he never suspicioned her, and Miss Hinch not darin' to cut and run for it till she was sure she had a clean getaway. Well now, Tim, what better could he do——"

"That's right!" exclaimed the third policeman. "'Specially when ye think that Hinch carries a gun, an'll use it, too! Why not have a look in at the subway station anyway, the three of us?"

The proposal carried the day. The three officers started for the subway, the citizen following. They walked at a good pace and without more talk; and both their speed and their silence had a subtle psychological reaction. As the minds of the policemen turned inward upon the odd behavior of the pair in Miller's Restaurant, the conviction that, after all, something important might be afoot grew and strengthened within each one of them. Unconsciously their pace quickened. It was the wiry policeman who first broke into an open run, but the two others had been for twenty paces on the verge of it.

However, these consultations and vacillations had taken time. The stout clergyman and the poor old woman had five minutes' start of the officers of the law, and that, as it happened, was all that the occasion required. On Fourteenth Street, as they made their way arm in arm to the station, they were seen, and remembered, by a number of belated pedestrians. It was observed by more than one that the woman lagged as if she were tired, while the club-footed divine, supporting her on his arm, steadily kept her up to his own brisk gait.

So walking, the pair descended the subway steps, came out upon the bare platform again, and presently stood once more at the extreme uptown end of it, just where they had waited half an hour before. Near by a careless porter had overturned a bucket of water, and a splotch of thin ice ran out and over the edge of the concrete.

Two young men who were taking lively turns up and down distinctly heard the clergyman warn the woman to look out for this ice. Far away to the north was to be heard the faint roar of an approaching train.

The woman stood nearer the track, and the clergyman stood in front of her. In the vague light their looks met, and each was struck by the pallor of the other's face. In addition, the woman was breathing hard, and her hands and feet betrayed some nervousness. It was difficult now to ignore the too patent fact that for an hour they had been clinging desperately to each other, at all costs; but the clergyman made a creditable effort to do so. He talked ramblingly, in a voice sounding only a little unnatural, for the most part of the deplorable weather and his train to Jersey, for which he was now so late. And all the time both of them were incessantly turning their heads toward the station entrances, as if expecting some arrival.

As he talked, the clergyman kept his hands unobtrusively busy. From the bottom edge of his black sack-coat he drew a pin, and stuck it deep into the ball of his middle finger. He took out his handkerchief to dust the hard sleet from his hat; and under his overcoat he pressed the handkerchief against his bleeding finger. While making these small arrangements, he held the woman's eyes with his own, talking on; and, still holding them, he suddenly broke off his random talk and peered at her cheek with concern.

"My good woman, you've scratched your cheek somehow! Why, bless me, it's bleeding quite badly."

"Never mind,—never mind," said the woman, and swept her eyes hurriedly toward the entrance.

"But, good gracious, I must mind! The blood will fall on your shawl. If you will permit me—ah!"

Too quick for her, he leaned forward and, through the thin veil, swept her cheek hard with the handkerchief; removing it, he held it up so that she might see the blood for herself. But she did not glance at the handkerchief, and neither did he. His gaze was riv-

eted upon her cheek, which looked smooth and clear where he had smudged the clever wrinkles away.

Down the steps and upon the platform pounded the feet of three flying policemen. But it was evident now that the train would thunder in just ahead of them. The clergyman, standing close in front of the woman, took a firmer grip on his heavy stick and a look of stern triumph came into his face.

"You're not so terribly clever, after all!"

The woman had sprung back from him with an irrepressible exclamation, and in that instant she was aware of the police.

However, her foot slipped upon the treacherous ice—or it may have tripped on the stout cane, when the clergyman suddenly shifted its position. And in the next breath the train came roaring past.

By one of those curious chances which sometimes refute all experience, the body of the woman was not mangled or mutilated in the least. There was a deep blue bruise on the left temple, and apparently that was all; even the ancient hat remained on her head, skewered fast by the long pin. It was the clergyman who found the body huddled at the side of the dark track where the train had flung it—he who covered the still face and superintended the removal to the platform. Two eye-witnesses of the tragedy pointed out the ice on which the unfortunate woman had slipped, and described their horror as they saw her companion spring forward just too late to save her.

Not wishing to bring on a delirium of excitement among the bystanders, two policemen drew the clergyman quietly aside and showed him the three mysterious messages. Much affected by the shocking end of his sleuthery as he was, he readily admitted having written them. He briefly recounted how the woman's strange movements on 126th Street had arrested his attention and how, watching her closely on the car, he had finally detected that she wore a wig. Unfortunately, however, her suspicions had been aroused by his interest in her, and thereafter a long battle of wits had ensued between them—he trying to summon the police without

her knowledge, she dogging him close to prevent that, and at the same time watching her chance to give him the slip. He rehearsed how, in the restaurant, when he had invented an excuse to leave her for an instant, she had made a bolt and narrowly missed getting away; and finally how, having brought her back to the subway and seeing the police at last near, he had decided to risk exposing her make-up, with this unexpectedly shocking result.

"And now," he concluded in a shaken voice, "I am naturally most anxious to know whether I am right—or have made some terrible mistake. Will you look at her, officer, and tell me if it is indeed—she?"

But the fat policeman shook his head over the well-known ability of Miss Hinch to look like everybody else in the world but herself.

"It'll take God Almighty to tell ye that, sir—saving your presence. I'll leave it f'r headquarters," he continued, as if that were the same thing. "But, if it is her, she's gone to her reward, sir."

"God pity her!" said the clergyman.

"Amen! Give me your name, sir. They'll likely want you in the morning."

The clergyman gave it: Rev. Theodore Shaler, of Denver; city address, a number on East 11th Street. Having thus discharged his duty in the affair, he started sadly to go away; but, passing by the silent figure stretched on a bench under the ticket-seller's overcoat, he bared his head and stopped for one last look at it.

The parson's gentleness and efficiency had already won favorable comments from the bystanders, and of the first quality he now gave a final proof. The dead woman's balled-up handkerchief, which somebody had recovered from the track and laid upon her breast, had slipped to the floor; and the clergyman, observing it, stooped silently to restore it again. This last small service chanced to bring his head close to the head of the dead woman; and, as he straightened up again, her projecting hatpin struck his cheek and ripped a straight line down it. This in itself would have been a trifle, since scratches soon heal. But it happened that the point of the hatpin caught under the lining of the clergyman's perfect beard and

ripped it clean from him; so that, as he rose with a suddenly shrilled cry, he turned upon the astonished onlookers the bare, smooth chin of a woman, curiously long and pointed.

There were not many such chins in the world, and the urchins in the street would have recognized this one. Amid a sudden uproar which ill became the presence of the dead, the police closed in on Miss Hinch and handcuffed her with violence, fearing suicide, if not some new witchery; and at the station-house an unemotional matron divested the famous impersonator of the last and best of all her many disguises.

This much the police did. But it was everywhere understood that it was Jessie Dark who had really made the capture, and the papers next morning printed pictures of the unconquerable little woman and of the hatpin with which she had reached back from another world to bring her greatest adversary to justice.

A SOURCE OF IRRITATION

By

STACY AUMONIER

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Mr. Aumonier served in the Great War, and must have seen first-hand both the sort of trench life, and the kind of English regimental headquarters activity, that he has us glimpse through Sam Gate's eyes. Since Sam's eyes are dull for what they are not accustomed to look at, we do not see enough of the horror of the front to mar our enjoyment of what is funny in the story.

STACY AUMONIER was an Englishman, whose Huguenot descent accounts for his French name. His untimely death at Christmas, 1928, grieved all who knew his brave spirit.

He was a versatile artist. He began his career as a landscape painter and decorative designer, became a Society Entertainer, giving recitals of his own original sketches, and in 1913 took up writing. He wrote many short stories, a considerable number of which were published in American periodicals. When he died he held a high rank as a short story writer.

Stacy Aumonier's books include five novels and the following volumes of short stories: *Three Bars' Interval, The Love-a-Duck, Miss Bracegirdle and Others, Odd Fish, Overheard, The Baby Grand,* and *The Golden Windmill.*

A SOURCE OF IRRITATION

By Stacy Aumonier

TO LOOK at old Sam Gates you would never suspect him of having nerves. His sixty-nine years of close application to the needs of the soil had given him a certain earthy stolidity. To observe him hoeing, or thinning out a broad field of turnips, hardly attracted one's attention, he seemed so much part and parcel of the whole scheme. He blended into the soil like a glorified swede. Nevertheless, the half-dozen people who claimed his acquaintance knew him to be a man who suffered from little moods of irritability.

And on this glorious morning a little incident annoyed him unreasonably. It concerned his niece, Aggie. She was a plump girl with clear, blue eyes, and a face as round and inexpressive as the dumplings for which the county was famous. She came slowly across the long sweep of the downland and, putting down the bundle wrapped in a red handkerchief which contained his breakfast and dinner, she said:

"Well, Uncle, is there any noos?"

Now, this may not appear to the casual reader to be a remark likely to cause irritation, but it affected old Sam Gates as a very silly and unnecessary question. It was, moreover, the constant repetition of it which was beginning to anger him. He met his niece twice a day. In the morning she brought his bundle of food at seven, and when he passed his sister's cottage on the way home to tea at five she was invariably hanging about the gate, and she always said in the same voice:

"Well, Uncle, is there any noos?"

Noos! What noos should there be? For sixty-nine years he had

Swede: a Swedish turnip.

never lived farther than five miles from Halvesham. For nearly sixty of those years he had bent his back above the soil. There were, indeed, historic occasions. Once, for instance, when he had married Annie Hachet. And there was the birth of his daughter. There was also a famous occasion when he had visited London. Once he had been to a flower-show at Market Roughborough. He either went or didn't go to church on Sundays. He had had many interesting chats with Mr. James at the Cowman, and three years ago had sold a pig to Mrs. Way. But he couldn't always have interesting noos of this sort up his sleeve. Didn't the silly zany know that for the last three weeks he had been hoeing and thinning out turnips for Mr. Hodge on this very same field? What noos could there be?

He blinked at his niece, and didn't answer. She undid the parcel and said:

"Mrs. Goping's foul got out again last night."

"Ah," he replied in a non-committal manner and began to munch his bread and bacon. His niece picked up the handkerchief and, humming to herself, walked back across the field.

It was a glorious morning, and a white sea mist added to the promise of a hot day. He sat there munching, thinking of nothing in particular, but gradually subsiding into a mood of placid content. He noticed the back of Aggie disappear in the distance. It was a mile to the cottage and a mile and a half to Halvesham. Silly things, girls. They were all alike. One had to make allowances. He dismissed her from his thoughts, and took a long swig of tea out of a bottle. Insects buzzed lazily. He tapped his pocket to assure himself that his pouch of shag was there, and then he continued munching. When he had finished, he lighted his pipe and stretched himself comfortably. He looked along the line of turnips he had thinned and then across the adjoining field of swedes. Silver streaks appeared on the sea below the mist. In some dim way he felt happy in his solitude amidst this sweeping immensity of earth and sea and sky.

Shag: a poor but strong tobacco.

And then something else came to irritate him: it was one of "these dratted airyplanes." "Airyplanes" were his pet aversion. He could find nothing to be said in their favor. Nasty, noisy, disfiguring things that seared the heavens and made the earth dangerous. And every day there seemed to be more and more of them. Of course "this old war" was responsible for a lot of them, he knew. The war was a "plaguy noosance." They were short-handed on the farm, beer and tobacco were dear, and Mrs. Steven's nephew had been and got wounded in the foot.

He turned his attention once more to the turnips; but an "airyplane" has an annoying genius for gripping one's attention. When it appears on the scene, however much we dislike it, it has a way of taking the stage-center. We cannot help constantly looking at it. And so it was with old Sam Gates. He spat on his hands and blinked up at the sky. And suddenly the aëroplane behaved in a very extraordinary manner. It was well over the sea when it seemed to lurch drunkenly and skimmed the water. Then it shot up at a dangerous angle and zigzagged. It started to go farther out, and then turned and made for the land. The engines were making a curious grating noise. It rose once more, and then suddenly dived downward, and came plump down right in the middle of Mr. Hodge's field of swedes.

And then, as if not content with this desecration, it ran along the ground, ripping and tearing up twenty-five yards of good swedes, and then came to a stop.

Old Sam Gates was in a terrible state. The aëroplane was more than a hundred yards away, but he waved his arms and called out:

"Hi, you there, you mustn't land in they swedes! They're Mister Hodge's."

The instant the aëroplane stopped, a man leaped out and gazed quickly round. He glanced at Sam Gates, and seemed uncertain whether to address him or whether to concentrate his attention on the flying-machine. The latter arrangement appeared to be his ultimate decision. He dived under the engine and became frantically busy. Sam had never seen any one work with such furious energy;

but all the same it was not to be tolerated. It was disgraceful. Sam started out across the field, almost hurrying in his indignation. When he appeared within earshot of the aviator he cried out again:

"Hi! you mustn't rest your old airyplane here! You've kicked up all Mr. Hodge's swedes. A noice thing you've done!"

He was within five yards when suddenly the aviator turned and covered him with a revolver! And speaking in a sharp, staccato voice, he said:

"Old Grandfather, you must sit down. I am very much occupied. If you interfere or attempt to go away, I shoot you. So!"

Sam gazed at the horrid, glittering little barrel and gasped. Well, he never! To be threatened with murder when you're doing your duty in your employer's private property! But, still, perhaps the man was mad. A man must be more or less mad to go up in one of those crazy things. And life was very sweet on that summer morning despite sixty-nine years. He sat down among the swedes.

The aviator was so busy with his cranks and machinery that he hardly deigned to pay him any attention except to keep the revolver handy. He worked feverishly, and Sam sat watching him. At the end of ten minutes he appeared to have solved his troubles with the machine, but he still seemed very scared. He kept on glancing round and out to sea. When his repairs were complete he straightened his back and wiped the perspiration from his brow. He was apparently on the point of springing back into the machine and going off when a sudden mood of facetiousness, caused by relief from the strain he had endured, came to him. He turned to old Sam and smiled, at the same time remarking:

"Well, old Grandfather, and now we shall be all right, isn't it?"

He came close up to Sam, and then suddenly started back.

"Gott!" he cried, "Paul Jouperts!"

Bewildered, Sam gazed at him, and the madman started talking to him in some foreign tongue. Sam shook his head.

"You no roight," he remarked, "to come bargin' through they swedes of Mr. Hodge's."

And then the aviator behaved in a most peculiar manner. He

came up and examined Sam's face very closely, and gave a sudden tug at his beard and hair, as if to see whether they were real or false.

"What is your name, old man?" he said.

"Sam Gates."

The aviator muttered some words that sounded something like "mare vudish," and then turned to his machine. He appeared to be dazed and in a great state of doubt. He fumbled with some cranks, but kept glancing at old Sam. At last he got into the car and strapped himself in. Then he stopped, and sat there deep in thought. At last he suddenly unstrapped himself and sprang out again and, approaching Sam, said very deliberately:

"Old Grandfather, I shall require you to accompany me."

Sam gasped.

"Eh?" he said. "What be talkin' about? 'Company? I got these 'ere loines o' turnips—I be already behoind——"

The disgusting little revolver once more flashed before his eyes.

"There must be no discussion," came the voice. "It is necessary that you mount the seat of the car without delay. Otherwise I shoot you like the dog you are. So!"

Old Sam was hale and hearty. He had no desire to die so ignominiously. The pleasant smell of the Norfolk downland was in his nostrils; his foot was on his native heath. He mounted the seat of the car, contenting himself with a mutter:

"Well, that be a noice thing, I must say! Flyin' about the country with all they turnips on'y half thinned!"

He found himself strapped in. The aviator was in a fever of anxiety to get away. The engines made a ghastly sputter and noise. The thing started running along the ground. Suddenly it shot upward, giving the swedes a last contemptuous kick. At twenty minutes to eight that morning old Sam found himself being borne right up above his fields and out to sea! His breath came quickly. He was a little frightened.

"God forgive me!" he murmured.

"Mare vudish": for *merkwürdig,* remarkable.

The thing was so fantastic and sudden that his mind could not grasp it. He only felt in some vague way that he was going to die, and he struggled to attune his mind to the change. He offered up a mild prayer to God, Who, he felt, must be very near, somewhere up in these clouds. Automatically he thought of the vicar at Halvesham, and a certain sense of comfort came to him at the reflection that on the previous day he had taken a "cooking of runner beans" to God's representative in that village. He felt calmer after that, but the horrid machine seemed to go higher and higher. He could not turn in his seat and he could see nothing but sea and sky. Of course the man was mad, mad as a March hare. Of what earthly use could *he* be to any one? Besides, he had talked pure gibberish, and called him Paul something, when he had already told him that his name was Sam. The thing would fall down into the sea soon, and they would both be drowned. Well, well, he had almost reached three-score years and ten. He was protected by a screen, but it seemed very cold. What on earth would Mr. Hodge say? There was no one left to work the land but a fool of a boy named Billy Whitehead at Dene's Cross. On, on, on they went at a furious pace. His thoughts danced disconnectedly from incidents of his youth, conversations with the vicar, hearty meals in the open, a frock his sister wore on the day of the postman's wedding, the drone of a psalm, the illness of some ewes belonging to Mr. Hodge. Everything seemed to be moving very rapidly, upsetting his sense of time. He felt outraged, and yet at moments there was something entrancing in the wild experience. He seemed to be living at an incredible pace. Perhaps he was really dead and on his way to the kingdom of God. Perhaps this was the way they took people.

After some indefinite period he suddenly caught sight of a long strip of land. Was this a foreign country, or were they returning? He had by this time lost all feeling of fear. He became interested and almost disappointed. The "airyplane" was not such a fool as it looked. It was very wonderful to be right up in the sky like this. His dreams were suddenly disturbed by a fearful noise. He thought

the machine was blown to pieces. It dived and ducked through the air, and things were bursting all round it and making an awful din, and then it went up higher and higher. After a while these noises ceased, and he felt the machine gliding downward. They were really right above solid land—trees, fields, streams, and white villages. Down, down, down they glided. This was a foreign country. There were straight avenues of poplars and canals. This was not Halvesham. He felt the thing glide gently and bump into a field. Some men ran forward and approached them, and the mad aviator called out to them. They were mostly fat men in gray uniforms, and they all spoke this foreign gibberish. Some one came and unstrapped him. He was very stiff and could hardly move. An exceptionally gross-looking man punched him in the ribs and roared with laughter. They all stood round and laughed at him, while the mad aviator talked to them and kept pointing at him. Then he said:

"Old Grandfather, you must come with me."

He was led to an iron-roofed building and shut in a little room. There were guards outside with fixed bayonets. After a while the mad aviator appeared again, accompanied by two soldiers. He beckoned him to follow. They marched through a quadrangle and entered another building. They went straight into an office where a very important-looking man, covered with medals, sat in an easy-chair. There was a lot of saluting and clicking of heels. The aviator pointed at Sam and said something, and the man with the medals started at sight of him, and then came up and spoke to him in English.

"What is your name? Where do you come from? Your age? The name and birthplace of your parents?"

He seemed intensely interested, and also pulled his hair and beard to see if they came off. So well and naturally did he and the aviator speak English that after a voluble examination they drew apart, and continued the conversation in that language. And the extraordinary conversation was of this nature:

"It is a most remarkable resemblance," said the man with medals.

"Unglaublich! But what do you want me to do with him, Hausemann?"

"The idea came to me suddenly, Excellency," replied the aviator, "and you may consider it worthless. It is just this. The resemblance is so amazing. Paul Jouperts has given us more valuable information than any one at present in our service, and the English know that. There is an award of five thousand francs on his head. Twice they have captured him, and each time he escaped. All the company commanders and their staff have his photograph. He is a serious thorn in their flesh."

"Well?" replied the man with the medals.

The aviator whispered confidentially:

"Suppose, your Excellency, that they found the dead body of Paul Jouperts?"

"Well?" replied the big man.

"My suggestion is this. To-morrow, as you know, the English are attacking Hill 701, which for tactical reasons we have decided to evacuate. If after the attack they find the dead body of Paul Jouperts in, say, the second lines, they will take no further trouble in the matter. You know their lack of thoroughness. Pardon me, I was two years at Oxford University. And consequently Paul Jouperts will be able to prosecute his labors undisturbed."

The man with the medals twirled his mustache and looked thoughtfully at his colleague.

"Where is Paul at the moment?" he asked.

"He is acting as a gardener at the Convent of St. Eloise, at Mailleton-en-haut, which, as you know, is one hundred meters from the headquarters of the British central army staff."

The man with the medals took two or three rapid turns up and down the room, then he said:

"Your plan is excellent, Hausemann. The only point of difficulty is that the attack started this morning."

"This morning?" exclaimed the other.

"Yes; the English attacked unexpectedly at dawn. We have

Unglaublich! Unbelievable.

already evacuated the first line. We shall evacuate the second line at eleven-fifty. It is now ten-fifteen. There may be just time."

He looked suddenly at old Sam in the way that a butcher might look at a prize heifer at an agricultural show and remarked casually:

"Yes, it is a remarkable resemblance. It seems a pity not to—do something with it."

Then, speaking in German, he added:

"It is worth trying. And if it succeeds, the higher authorities shall hear of your lucky accident and inspiration, Herr Hausemann. Instruct *Ober-lieutenant* Schultz to send the old fool by two orderlies to the east extremity of Trench 38. Keep him there till the order of evacuation is given, then shoot him, but don't disfigure him, and lay him out face upward."

The aviator saluted and withdrew, accompanied by his victim. Old Sam had not understood the latter part of the conversation, and he did not catch quite all that was said in English; but he felt that somehow things were not becoming too promising, and it was time to assert himself. So he remarked when they got outside:

"Now, look'ee 'ere, Mister, when am I goin' to get back to my turnips?"

And the aviator replied, with a pleasant smile:

"Do not be disturbed, old Grandfather. You shall get back to the soil quite soon."

In a few moments he found himself in a large gray car, accompanied by four soldiers. The aviator left him. The country was barren and horrible, full of great pits and rents, and he could hear the roar of artillery and the shriek of shells. Overhead, aëroplanes were buzzing angrily. He seemed to be suddenly transported from the kingdom of God to the pit of darkness. He wondered whether the vicar had enjoyed the runner beans. He could not imagine runner beans growing here; runner beans, aye, or anything else. If this was a foreign country, give him dear old England!

G-r-r! bang! Something exploded just at the rear of the car.

Ober-lieutenant: First Lieutenant.

The soldiers ducked, and one of them pushed him in the stomach and swore.

"An ugly-looking lout," he thought. "If I wor twenty years younger, I'd give him a punch in the eye that 'u'd make him sit up."

The car came to a halt by a broken wall. The party hurried out and dived behind a mound. He was pulled down a kind of shaft, and found himself in a room buried right underground, where three officers were drinking and smoking. The soldiers saluted and handed them a type-written dispatch. The officers looked at him drunkenly, and one came up and pulled his beard and spat in his face and called him "an old English swine." He then shouted out some instructions to the soldiers, and they led him out into the narrow trench. One walked behind him, and occasionally prodded him with the butt-end of a gun. The trenches were half full of water and reeked of gases, powder, and decaying matter. Shells were constantly bursting overhead, and in places the trenches had crumbled and were nearly blocked up. They stumbled on, sometimes falling, sometimes dodging moving masses, and occasionally crawling over the dead bodies of men. At last they reached a deserted-looking trench, and one of the soldiers pushed him into the corner of it and growled something, and then disappeared round the angle. Old Sam was exhausted. He leaned panting against the mud wall, expecting every minute to be blown to pieces by one of those infernal things that seemed to be getting more and more insistent. The din went on for nearly twenty minutes, and he was alone in the trench. He fancied he heard a whistle amidst the din. Suddenly one of the soldiers who had accompanied him came stealthily round the corner, and there was a look in his eye old Sam did not like. When he was within five yards the soldier raised his rifle and pointed it at Sam's body. Some instinct impelled the old man at that instant to throw himself forward on his face. As he did so he was aware of a terrible explosion, and he had just time to observe the soldier falling in a heap near him, and then he lost consciousness.

His consciousness appeared to return to him with a snap. He was lying on a plank in a building, and he heard some one say,

"I believe the old boy's English."

He looked round. There were a lot of men lying there, and others in khaki and white overalls were busy among them. He sat up, rubbed his head, and said:

"Hi, Mister, where be I now?"

Some one laughed, and a young man came up and said:

"Well, old man, you were very nearly in hell. Who are you?"

Some one came up, and two of them were discussing him. One of them said:

"He's quite all right. He was only knocked out. Better take him in to the colonel. He may be a spy."

The other came up, touched his shoulder, and remarked:

"Can you walk, Uncle?"

He replied:

"Aye, I can walk all roight."

"That's an old sport!"

The young man took his arm and helped him out of the room into a courtyard. They entered another room, where an elderly, kind-faced officer was seated at a desk. The officer looked up and exclaimed:

"Good God! Bradshaw, do you know who you've got there?"

The younger one said:

"No. Who, sir?"

"It's Paul Jouperts!" exclaimed the colonel.

"Paul Jouperts! Great Scott!"

The older officer addressed himself to Sam. He said:

"Well, we've got you once more, Paul. We shall have to be a little more careful this time."

The young officer said:

"Shall I detail a squad, sir?"

"We can't shoot him without a court-martial," replied the kind-faced senior.

Then Sam interpolated:

"Look 'ee 'ere, I'm fair' sick of all this. My name bean't Paul. My name's Sam. I was a-thinnin' a loine o' turnips——"

Both officers burst out laughing, and the younger one said:

"Good! Good! Isn't it amazing, sir, the way they not only learn the language, but even take the trouble to learn a dialect!"

The older man busied himself with some papers.

"Well, Sam," he remarked, "you shall be given a chance to prove your identity. Our methods are less drastic than those of your *Boche* masters. What part of England are you supposed to come from? Let's see how much you can bluff us with your topographical knowledge."

"I was a-thinnin' a loine o' turnips this mornin' at 'alf-past seven on Mr. Hodge's farm at Halvesham when one o' these 'ere airyplanes come down among the swedes. I tells 'e to get clear o' that, when the feller what gets out o' the car 'e drahs a revowlver and 'e says, 'You must 'company I——'"

"Yes, yes," interrupted the senior officer; "that's all very good. Now tell me—where is Halvesham? What is the name of the local vicar? I'm sure you'd know that."

Old Sam rubbed his chin.

"I sits under the Reverend David Pryce, Mister, and a good, God-fearin' man he be. I took him a cookin' o' runner beans on'y yesterday. I works for Mr. Hodge, what owns Greenway Manor and 'as a stud-farm at Newmarket, they say."

"Charles Hodge?" asked the young officer.

"Aye, Charlie Hodge. You write and ask un if he knows old Sam Gates."

The two officers looked at each other, and the older one looked at Sam more closely.

"It's very extraordinary," he remarked.

"Everybody knows Charlie Hodge," added the young officer.

It was at that moment that a wave of genius swept over old Sam. He put his hand to his head and suddenly jerked out:

Boche: German.

"What's more, I can tell 'ee wheer this yere Paul is. He's actin' as gardener in a convent at——" He puckered up his brows, fumbled with his hat, and then got out, "Mighteno."

The old officer gasped.

"Mailleton-en-haut! Good God! what makes you say that, old man?"

Sam tried to give an account of his experience and the things he had heard said by the German officers; but he was getting tired, and he broke off in the middle to say:

"Ye haven't a bite o' somethin' to eat, I suppose, Mister; or a glass o' beer? I usually 'as my dinner at twelve o'clock."

Both the officers laughed, and the older said:

"Get him some food, Bradshaw, and a bottle of beer from the mess. We'll keep this old man here. He interests me."

While the younger man was doing this, the chief pressed a button and summoned another junior officer.

"Gateshead," he remarked, "ring up the G. H. Q. and instruct them to arrest the gardener in that convent at the top of the hill and then to report."

The officer saluted and went out, and in a few minutes a tray of hot food and a large bottle of beer were brought to the old man, and he was left alone in the corner of the room to negotiate this welcome compensation. And in the execution he did himself and his county credit. In the meanwhile the officers were very busy. People were coming and going and examining maps, and telephone bells were ringing furiously. They did not disturb old Sam's gastric operations. He cleaned up the mess tins and finished the last drop of beer. The senior officer found time to offer him a cigarette, but he replied:

"Thank 'ee kindly, sir, but I'd rather smoke my pipe."

The colonel smiled and said:

"Oh, all right; smoke away."

He lighted up, and the fumes of the shag permeated the room.

G. H. Q.: General Headquarters.

Some one opened another window, and the young officer who had addressed him at first suddenly looked at him and exclaimed:

"Innocent! You couldn't get shag like that anywhere but in Norfolk."

It must have been an hour later when another officer entered and saluted.

"Message from the G. H. Q., sir," he said.

"Well?"

"They have arrested the gardener at the convent of St. Eloise, and they have every reason to believe that he is the notorious Paul Jouperts."

The colonel stood up, and his eyes beamed. He came over to old Sam and shook his hand.

"Mr. Gates," he said, "you are an old brick. You will probably hear more of this. You have probably been the means of delivering something very useful into our hands. Your own honor is vindicated. A loving Government will probably award you five shillings or a Victoria Cross or something of that sort. In the meantime, what can I do for you?"

Old Sam scratched his chin.

"I want to get back 'ome," he said.

"Well, even that might be arranged."

"I want to get back 'ome in toime for tea."

"What time do you have tea?"

"Foive o'clock or thereabouts."

"I see."

A kindly smile came into the eyes of the colonel. He turned to another officer standing by the table and said:

"Raikes, is any one going across this afternoon with dispatches?"

"Yes, sir," replied the other officer. "Commander Jennings is leaving at three o'clock."

"You might ask him if he could see me."

Within ten minutes a young man in a flight-commander's uniform entered.

"Ah, Jennings," said the colonel, "here is a little affair which concerns the honor of the British army. My friend here, Sam Gates, has come over from Halvesham, in Norfolk, in order to give us valuable information. I have promised him that he shall get home to tea at five o'clock. Can you take a passenger?"

The young man threw back his head and laughed.

"Lord!" he exclaimed, "what an old sport! Yes, I expect I can manage it. Where is the forsaken place?"

A large ordnance-map of Norfolk (which had been captured from a German officer) was produced, and the young man studied it closely.

At three o'clock precisely old Sam, finding himself something of a hero and quite glad to escape from the embarrassment which this position entailed upon him, once more sped skyward in a "dratted airyplane."

At twenty minutes to five he landed once more among Mr. Hodge's swedes. The breezy young airman shook hands with him and departed inland. Old Sam sat down and surveyed the familiar field of turnips.

"A noice thing, I must say!" he muttered to himself as he looked along the lines of unthinned turnips. He still had twenty minutes, and so he went slowly along and completed a line which he had begun in the morning. He then deliberately packed up his dinner-things and his tools and started out for home.

As he came round the corner of Stillway's meadow and the cottage came in view, his niece stepped out of the copse with a basket on her arm.

"Well, Uncle," she said, "is there any noos?"

It was then that old Sam really lost his temper.

"Noos!" he said. "Noos! Drat the girl! What noos should there be? Sixty-nine year' I live in these 'ere parts, hoein' and weedin' and thinnin', and mindin' Charlie Hodge's sheep. Am I one o' these 'ere story-book folk havin' noos 'appen to me all the time? Ain't it enough, ye silly, dab-faced zany, to earn enough to

buy a bite o' some'at to eat and a glass o' beer and a place to rest a's head o'night without always wantin' noos, noos, noos! I tell 'ee it's this that leads 'ee to 'alf the troubles in the world. Devil take the noos!"

And turning his back on her, he went fuming up the hill.

LEGEND

By

FLETA CAMPBELL SPRINGER

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In every Gypsy tribe there are those who have "second sight"—the ability to see the future. Was it their strain of Gypsy blood that gave the Klinger girls their power to see at times beyond the range of human vision? "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamed of in your philosophy."

LEGEND won the first prize in the Second Harper Prize Story Competition, held in 1924.

FLETA CAMPBELL SPRINGER was born in Newton, Kansas. Her family moved to Oklahoma when she was three, and her girlhood was spent in the frontier life of what was then Oklahoma Territory. When she was ten years old, she learned to ride a horse, using a looped rope instead of a bridle. As a young woman she attended the University of Oklahoma. She has lived in Texas and California, but for some years has made her home in New York.

It is as a short story writer that Fleta Campbell Springer is best known, although she has written a number of essays and one novel, *Gregg*. Her stories number between fifty and sixty, and most of them have appeared in *Harper's Magazine*. A collection of her stories will shortly be published in book form.

LEGEND

By Fleta Campbell Springer

THEY went by on the narrow sandy road like mounted figures out of an antique rustic frieze. Two tall, amazingly tall young women, in dark print dresses and men's straw hats, riding slowly, one after the other, on horses as exactly alike as they. Long black straps of loosened harness depended like decorations from shoulders and flanks, like brush strokes accenting the elongated lines of the riders, who sat sidewise, facing us, two-dimensional in the quiet evening light; and their dresses hung straight and full from their long fine waists to their feet. As they passed, deliberately, without haste, the measured effortless footfalls of their horses soundless on the yielding sand, the dark eyes of these women under the sun-burned down-turned brims of their identical hats rested upon us calmly, incuriously, turning evenly with their passage, impersonally, as the eyes of pictures seem to turn.

An illusion of figures coming from no imagined place, carried forward to no destination more real than the remote and inevitable termination of a myth.

They passed, but the moment endured, as if for their passage a single instant of time had prolonged itself.

Beside me, Martha on her knees before her tiny plot of flowers, so precious in that arid land, knelt upright and motionless as if she too were held by some strangeness in the air.

"Were they——" I asked, my voice rude on the stillness, "*were* they as tall as they seemed, or was it—the light?"

Martha smiled.

"No, it wasn't the light," she said. "They're just as tall as they looked."

That then, heightened as it surely was by some unnatural quality of the atmosphere, was my first impression of the two sisters known as "the Klinger girls." And I was never to see them afterward, passing as they sometimes did, not regularly but now and then on those magical windless evenings after the boisterous days, without a recurrence of that same sense of their unreality, of figures out of some heroic legend of which I knew neither the beginning nor the end. I was later to see them in other lights, at other times of day —and the illusion was still there.

Its persistence may have been partly due to the scarcity of the information I was able to elicit concerning them—a lack all the more striking in a community where the idiosyncrasies and activities of neighbors constituted almost the sole items of daily news. I had been half afraid of the commonplace details I should presently have through Martha in response to my questions about the two tall sisters. But there were no details. I had seen them pass twice, and returned to my questions a second time, before I had accumulated more than the simple facts of their name and of their living "over on the river road."

Was it far? No, not far, but it was out of sight. You couldn't see it from here.

Was there a family? A father. Just a father and the two girls.

What was the father like?

"Like?"

Yes, was he like the daughters—tall? Yes, tall. All the Klingers were tall.

Farmer? (I don't know why I asked that in a country where no one was anything else.) Martha was going on with her work, and she answered me in the tone of the competent farmer's wife she was. Not much of a farmer, she guessed. He was away most of the time.

"Business?" I asked.

She didn't know whether you'd call it business. He was supposed to be a kind of a horse trader, she thought.

Horse trader! Why was I glad? The daughters of a horse

trader—I could never have thought of it, and it seemed so exactly right. I could venture further then.

"And the daughters," I asked, "do they work somewhere? Where are they coming from when we see them passing here?"

"They've a forty down below." She nodded toward the south.

"Below where?"

"Between our land and Pierson's."

"But I thought your places adjoined, yours and Pierson's," I said. We had passed that way often enough since I had come, on our way to the Colony store—a perfectly level stretch.

"No," said Martha, "Klinger's forty lays in between."

"Queer I never noticed it," I said.

"No house on it," said Martha. "Maybe that's why. Just a little old tool shed for the plows and things."

Plows. Did the Klinger girls plow? I remembered the black straps of work-harness thrown over the horses' backs.

Well, Martha didn't know as they *plowed*—but they cultivated some, she guessed. Guessed they wasn't much for housework; rather be out with the horses anyhow.

I asked what they grew on that vague forty, and Martha seemed not exactly to know. They'd started, like everybody else, with grapes, but they let them go. A little of one thing, a little of another now, she thought. Mostly feed for the horses. Guessed they just about made their feed. Not much on farming, any of them.

No animosity in all this. Just an absence of interest; not even interest enough, it seemed, to wonder at my curiosity. She answered my questions as if I had asked her the time of day. Nothing offered, nothing added beyond the facts. And her work took her just then to the cellar, where I presently heard her churning busily away.

At supper that evening, with Martha's husband in his neat blue jumper sitting across from me, I brought up the Klingers again. It occurred to me suddenly to ask the sisters' names.

"Their first names?" said Martha. She seemed to ponder a bit.

"Why, I don't know 's I ever *heard*. Did you, Jim? Do you know their names?"

And Jim didn't know as *he'd* ever heard. "They're always together and I never heard 'em called anything but 'the Klinger girls.'"

The subject dropped. Not a word from either of them about its being queer, their not knowing the names. Nor any curiosity as to what they were. For a moment I wondered if some scandal about the Klinger girls had produced this reticence. But that, I immediately told myself, would have produced the opposite of reticence. For scandals were rare enough in the Colony, where everybody had, as Martha said, "too much work to do to think of much devilment." It was one of those subdivisions of the vast worn-out wheat tracts of the Pacific slope, colonized some four or five years before by all those tired, disillusioned, or tragically hopeful souls to whom the promise of owning at last a few acres of land is as the believer's promise of Paradise—and so to be labored for unceasingly to the end of life.

Strangers from everywhere a few years ago, now bound together by the same problems, the same struggles, the same antagonists—the "Company" and the stubborn resentful land. All their differences, peculiarities, their most trivial activities known and familiarly discussed. Already I knew the histories of half a dozen families.

Yet the Klingers had come with the rest, from what direction no one seemed even to have asked.

I had known foreigners to be treated in this way in country communities. But here were Tony Fuergacci, the Italian, and Chris Pierson, the Swede, whose foreign ways furnished endless comment for my hosts. And the Klingers were, so far as Martha could tell me, "just straight Americans," although, among those more stockily built sons of the soil, the Klingers with their exceptional height, their lean brown faces, and their dark bright eyes, did have the look of belonging to a different race. A look also of

those who live among people who speak an unknown tongue—that look of receiving impressions only through the eyes.

Perhaps somewhere, far back, there was gypsy blood. "Horse trader" suggested that. And their indifference to the land. Two forties, when the others dared but one. If they made the payments, well and good. Grazing for the horses. A spot to pitch a tent.

Indifference. That was it. Indifference to their neighbors' god. A god to be served, to be feared, to be propitiated with sacrifice. Did they follow, then, these strangers, some ritual and tradition of their own? Whatever god they served, it was a god that left them free, a god of few demands.

Weeks passed in which we saw no more of the Klinger girls. They disappeared out of our sight and our conversation—as if they didn't exist.

And then one noon at table I was recalled from some reverie into which my thoughts had strayed, to hear Jim across from me saying something about a heifer that had "broke through the fence again."

"That heifer seems to think a poke's put on her for a dare to go through the fence. Well, I'll have to get out and hunt her this afternoon. She travels, too. Keeps right on goin' once she's out. Wish I knew which way she went."

And Martha quietly said, "Better ask the Klinger girls."

I caught the edge of her dry little smile, waited an instant and asked, "Why the Klinger girls?"

Martha glanced at Jim, still with the dry little smile.

"They're spiritualists."

"Spiritualists!" I jumped at it.

"Well, they find things," she said. "Found Orville's horses for him; didn't they, Jim?"

"It's what Orville tells," said Jim.

"Found them—how do you mean?"

They told me the tale quite casually, that very casualness giving the most unusual touch.

Several summers ago, it seemed, three of Orville's horses had

strayed. He had searched the better part of two days when, going down the river road, he passed the Klinger house. The sisters were carrying water from the well, and Orville pulled up and called:

"Seen any stray horses down this way?"

They set down their buckets. No, they said. Had he lost some horses? He told them three—a sorrel and two bays. They shook their heads; they hadn't seen anything of them, no.

Orville started on. The girls took up their buckets and started toward the house. Presently Orville heard them call; he stopped and turned in his saddle. The sisters had stopped again.

"Did you look down on the Company's lower hundred?" the nearest one called.

"No," Orville answered, he hadn't got down there yet.

"That's where they are," she said.

"Did you see 'em there?" asked Orville, astonished.

"No," she said, "but that's where they are. Right inside that big bar gate below the draw, eating the green grass. One of the bars is down."

Orville asked her some questions about how she knew.

"If you go there, you'll find them," she said. And the two sisters went toward the house.

Orville didn't know why, but he turned his horse about and rode back to the corner, struck straight through to the other side of the Colony, and turned down the road that led to the "Company's lower hundred." He followed that road until he came to the draw and, beyond it, the big bar gate. And there were his horses, the three of them, the sorrel and the two bays, eating the long, lush grass, just inside the gate. And one of the bars was down.

That was the story. They left it there. But I had to know what they thought.

"Well," I asked, "what about it? Did they ever find out?"

"Oh, guess it's true, all right," said Jim, and began to push back his chair. "Well, got to get along. Got to find that heifer before night."

I watched him while he reached for his hat where it hung inside the kitchen door. Then as he turned to go, "Are you going to see them?" I asked.

"Who?"

"Why, the Klinger girls."

He gave me over his shoulder his slow, good-natured grin—a grin which acknowledged my little joke. Then he clapped on his hat and was gone.

Martha was clearing the table but I sat on at my place.

"So they're spiritualists," I said when she came in from the kitchen again.

"I don't know as they claim to be, but I suppose you'd call it that." And then, as if merely to illustrate the point, she told me about the message they brought to Mrs. McAllister.

I knew the McAllisters. We had seen them only the day before at the Colony store. I knew they had lost a son.

"He used to work in the City," Martha said, "and one day, about half past nine in the morning it was, Mrs. McAllister was doing her morning work and she saw the Klinger girls coming down the road—on their horses, of course—she thought on their way to the store. But pretty soon she heard a knock and there they stood, both of them. You know they don't neighbor much, and Mrs. McAllister was surprised when she come to the door. 'Your son's in trouble,' they told her, 'we thought we ought to let you know.' Mrs. McAllister was excited, of course. She kept on asking what, and they said maybe she'd better telephone.

"That was all they'd say; wouldn't say anything more. And as soon as they'd left Mrs. McAllister run all the way to Pierson's to a telephone, and got them to call up the City for her. Well, it seems her son hadn't been very well for a couple of days, and he'd took worse the night before. They didn't tell her then, but he'd died that morning about seven o'clock. I guess that's what they meant, the Klinger girls."

"Did they say they knew it?"

"I don't know as they did. Of course Mrs. McAllister thinks

he appeared to them, so they could let her know. You couldn't tell the McAllisters anything else."

Martha took up her neglected stack of plates and disappeared through the kitchen door. When she came back again I said, "Why didn't you tell me all this before?"

"Why, I don't know," she said, "just never thought of it, I suppose."

Never thought of it! And all the trivial commonplace things she *had* thought of to tell about people I had never even seen! And why had none of the neighbor women happened to speak of it? Did they fear, perhaps, to be asked whether they believed it or not? Or had it really gone out of their minds? There was nothing self-conscious in Martha's lack of interest. It lay deeper, maybe, than consciousness. For beyond the remark that they were "supposed to talk to spirits," a statement for which she furnished no incident, I got no more from Martha about the Klinger girls. And again they faded out of our conversation, as if they didn't exist.

It was toward the end of the month that I went one day with Martha to register. The Company had sent round a man to see that the women were voting as well as the men. The registration clerk was a Mrs. Nichols, a widow who lived in a small frame house near the Company store, and who managed to support herself by means of a Notary Public's commission and such odd employments as this.

It was cool in her little front room and I waited there, reading a book while Martha did her shopping at the store. It was the quiet time of the afternoon, quiet and hot outside, quiet and cool within. Mrs. Nichols was busy copying. I sat and read my book.

After a while an old man came. He planted his stick inside the door and heaved up his gnarled old body. He let himself heavily into a chair, knees apart, stick planted stoutly between, and faced Mrs. Nichols across the plain oak table with its open register. A man who had once been strong and proud of his strength, and

now he was old, too old and rheumatic these many years to work. I had seen him often, sitting outside in the yard at a certain place we passed—always the same chair, the same spot under the tree. Yet there was still strength in his voice when he answered the questions put to him:

"Name?"

"John Delavoy Todd."

"Age?"

"Eighty-six." A touch of challenge, a touch of pride.

"Occupation?"

"Laborer," out full and strong.

The pen paused a moment above the white page of the register, then wrote it down. Laborer. A brave and beautiful word. Yet the hands that grasped his stick were stiff with age and uselessness.

There were other questions, other replies, but I did not hear the rest. And then he went, with an old-fashioned "Good day, ma'am" for each of us, and a kind of loneliness in his eyes.

There was quiet again in the little front room. Mrs. Nichols went back to her copying, I to my book.

Ten minutes had passed, perhaps, when a shadow darkened the door and I glanced quickly up.

One of the Klinger girls stood inside. Tall and quiet she stood, in her dark print dress, and regarded us silently from under the down-turned brim of her hat. Something disconcerting in the calm regard of those live dark eyes, like the eyes of a creature unused to spaces so small as this in which she suddenly found herself.

"You came to register?"

She nodded as if the question were superfluous.

"The full name, please." The widow dipped and poised her pen.

"Charlotte Klinger."

The voice was like her; I cannot say quite how. A gentle voice; I do know that. So much did it seem a part of her that I did not even think of it till afterward. As I did not, till afterward, think

of her face. A lean brown face that only suggested to me how much like their father those daughters must look.

She made her answers deliberately, without hesitation, and yet with the slightest curious pause before each one, as if the question took that time to cross the space to her.

"Age?"

"Twenty-nine."

"Address?"

The pause. "Colony Station, R. F. D. 2."

She watched the pen moving on the white page of the register.

"Occupation?"

Again the pause; and then—

"Cartoonist," she calmly, astoundingly said.

There was a moment of utter silence in the little room. The widow's pen hung motionless above the page.

"You said——" she helplessly began.

"Cartoonist." No irony in the tone and no perverse intent. Instead, a kind of withdrawn self-possession and reserve. She had been asked. She told. And now repeated it.

Without even looking up or questioning any further, the widow wrote it down.

There came suddenly into my mind an advertisement I had seen in a magazine: "Be a Cartoonist! Can You Draw?" The name of a city, and post-office box. How many dreams had sprung to life at such chance words? How many saw themselves the thing they wished to be? Those muscular brown hands, so sure to guide a horse, might hold the feel of line—of form. "Cartoonist" though! Did some ironic humor lurk behind that grave exterior?

The routine questions and answers were going on, and one stood suddenly out. "Party affiliation," the question was. She waited a moment at that, and then, as one who seeks to comply with some request almost forgotten but now recalled, she said, "Democrat."

Only a shade less incongruous than "Cartoonist" it seemed from her. A shade *more* incongruous even it might have seemed in

another place than this. "Cartoonist" and "Democrat," from the lips of surely as fearless and pagan a creature as ever walked the earth.

It was laughable. But we did not laugh. For there was somehow a touch of pathos in it too. Indeed when she had gone, taking her leave with as little ceremony as she had come, pausing an instant against the light for her laconic "good-by," we did not speak of her at all.

I do not know why I asked no questions of Mrs. Nichols—except that I felt she knew no more than I. And she ventured no comment of her own. "Cartoonist"—"laborer"—they called to each other in my mind—while I sat pretending to read my book.

And presently Martha came with a bevy of neighbor women to register. And the little front room was filled with their laughter and sociability.

That night I said nothing about the incident of the afternoon. I did not even mention seeing one of "the Klinger girls." Yet I should have thought it strange enough if Martha had withheld that incident from me. Was I also to become a part of that conspiracy of reticence?

Never again did I hear the word "Cartoonist" in connection with the Klinger girls. And never, from that day to this, has it been explained.

Yet I thought of it in the days that followed, whenever I thought of them in that indefinite region where they lived "over the river road"—a region inhabited only by those vague shapes with whom, so it was said, "they talked."

The summer passed and I went away, to return the following year. And when I came it was to find the Colony astir with a thing that had happened a week before.

A man had been killed, a murder done—and the Klingers were accused.

The Colony was astir as a forest is stirred, not by a breeze in the branches but when the roots have felt a tremor of the earth.

This was what was known. About four o'clock on an afternoon ten days before, two Company officials out on Colony business and driving down the river road, had noticed as they passed the Klinger place the sisters standing in the yard. Farther on they had met two horses galloping toward them, up from the river, to which the road leads down. The horses swerved and passed them, and they kept on.

As they entered the woods that line the river banks they had come upon a light wagon drawn off at the side of the road, the harness lying as if it had been hastily dropped. Grass was trampled, the underbrush disturbed. A few feet farther, where the trees were thickest, they had heard, or thought they heard, a sound; and sensing trouble, had left the car to investigate.

In an open space between two trees a poorly dressed old man, a stranger, lay dead on the ground, his skull crushed in—and over him stood the father of the Klinger girls.

He made no attempt to escape. But he stepped back when he saw them and said quietly, "He's dead."

They could see he was not armed, but near by on the ground lay a heavy stick, one end of it covered with blood. And there was blood on the horse trader's hands.

Questioned, his statements had become immediately conflicting and confused. Two strange men, he said, had killed the old man, robbed him, and got away. Asked if he had seen it, he said no, they had got away before he arrived. Asked how he knew they had robbed him, he said, "Because he had a roll of bills."

"Who was he?" they asked, and he said he didn't know; the man was unconscious when he got there, and he'd never seen him before.

At this they had told Klinger he had better come with them to the authorities; and he went, willingly enough apparently. Once there he was immediately put under arrest. At first they had thought he was going to resist; but when they had snapped the handcuffs on his wrists he had calmed down at once and asked them to send for his daughters.

At the Klinger place the two horses that had been seen galloping

up the river road, and that evidently belonged to the murdered man, were found in the corral. The girls did not deny having taken them up. And within two hours both father and daughters were in custody—all three protesting their innocence.

This was the story they told. This the horse trader's remarkable alibi. Between three and four o'clock that afternoon, the sisters said, they had been together in the back part of the house. They had just finished washing dishes and were standing by the sink when they had "seen" (it was the word they used, although it would have been impossible for them really to have seen from there)—they had "seen" something happening down by the river. An old man driving a wagon was being attacked by two men who had suddenly appeared at the side of the road. They saw the wagon stop, saw the old man lean down to answer some question; saw one leap and seize him from behind while the other attempted to go through his pockets; saw the old man put up a fight; saw them drag him from his wagon, struggling; saw them drag him, still struggling, into the trees, and one hold him while the other found a club, a fallen limb of a tree; saw him come up from behind and fell the old man with a single blow; saw them take a roll of bills from his pocket and, leaving him bleeding on the ground, run back to the wagon, unhook the horses, fling down the harness, and ride away.

Seeing this, they said, they had run out and called to their father, who they thought was in the barn; but he had gone to the pasture to mend a fence. They had found him there, told him what they had seen, and he had hurried across the fields to the river the shortest way.

The father corroborated this story. His daughters had come to him in the field, told him what they had seen, and he had gone to be of help.

And they continued to stay by the story through repeated grillings, through the inquest, through the Grand Jury proceedings which resulted in the indictment of the father for murder, with the daughters held as material witnesses. Why not accomplices I

could not quite see, since their story was naturally held to be valueless by the authorities. Perhaps the State's attorney thought it wise to avoid arousing sympathy for the daughters, who were better known than their father in the community.

There were elaborations of the story, of course; details gathered from all sides. The sisters furnished descriptions of the two men they claimed to have seen. One, they said, was short and thin and "wiry-like," the other one taller and heavier, with long arms. They both wore slouch felt hats and were roughly dressed, "like hoboes," they said, "like tramps." The short one was in his shirt sleeves with a vest, a "kind of striped shirt," and wore elastic sleeve-holders, brown, with nickel snaps. The other one wore a coat. They saw them plainly, they said, and would recognize them anywhere. But no pair answering their description could be found.

The girls also said, in describing the fight, that the old man had "a kind of stiff knee." And this was later discovered to have been true, which supported, of course, the prosecution's theory that the murdered man was not unknown to them. The implications were plain: Klinger, the horse trader, had been in a quarrel with an old man whose horses he had determined to have—a sturdy team that would bring a good price in a district where good work horses were at a premium. Or the old man, who had appeared from nowhere apparently (so far as their tracings could find) might have been the victim of an ancient grudge. He had been an itinerant trader himself, perhaps. That would account for his being unknown. No relatives claimed him, although the murder was published far and wide.

Two weeks went by before they found a clue. A man who answered his description and who walked with a peculiar gait because of a stiffness of one knee, had stayed, with his horses and wagon, at the County Seat the night preceding the tragedy, at one of those "Feed Yard" hostelries that still exist unnoticed in the side streets of certain towns. But at such hostelries there is no register, and men are not required to tell their names. They buy feed, camp the night, and in the morning pass on.

But a chance word dropped that night led to the discovery that such a man had lived for a time in a certain isolated foothill district in the southern end of the state. He had occupied a small tenant farm, living alone in a little shack, and driven occasionally in to the village for groceries and supplies. Little was known of him except that he was supposed to have come from "the City," and that his name was Lee. About a month before, he had left the community—it was supposed, to return to the city again—but no one could be found to whom he had spoken of his plans. At any rate he had driven away with the wagon and team—immediately recognized by a neighbor, brought north for the purpose by the authorities, as the wagon and team of the murdered man. And the identification was complete. But there it stopped. They had discovered nothing but his name. Whatever past he had was lost in mystery.

The trial was set for the last week in July. No move was made by the defense for a delay—the lawyer employed by the Klingers deciding apparently to offer the story of his clients, however fantastic and irregular it seemed, and relying perhaps upon that very quality for its effect. It was all that he could do, since his clients stood stubbornly by their story, refusing to consider a more reasonable defense. Not a word of corroboration had appeared, nor any trace of the two men the sisters claimed to have "seen."

The Colony talked but little. But the thing was there in their silences. When they talked at all it was casually, as if they were not too much concerned.

Jim, reading the news, would only shake his head and say, "Looks bad for 'em, pretty bad."

The time drew near and witnesses were summoned to appear. Orville was summoned—Orville, whose horses the Klinger girls had "found." Mr. and Mrs. McAllister were called.

On the third day of the trial, held at the County Seat, I decided to go in. The State had presented its case with telling brevity: it established the crime, and offered the testimony of the two

Company officials. These men told of finding the defendant on the scene of the murder with blood on his hands, and they told the confusing statements he had made; they further testified to seeing the sisters standing in the yard, and to finding the horses of the murdered man in the Klinger corral. In addition, the State established the fact that the defendant spent much of his time away from home, and that he made frequent trips to the City, that same City from which the mysterious Lee was said to have come. Here the State had abruptly rested its case, at about half past two o'clock of the second day, leaving the defense to offer, if they chose, that unprovable and fantastic alibi. And that, with a kind of hopeless haste disguised as confidence, the attorney for the defense had proceeded at once to do. Immediately, without even consulting his clients, he had called one of the sisters to the witness-stand, where she had told her story without a single deviation from its original details. Then, with a counter-thrust of brevity, he had turned the witness over for cross-examination by the State. But the State's attorney had merely smiled and said "No questions" with the easy tolerance of one who wastes no words upon the obvious.

The defendant himself had followed his daughter to the stand and was still being questioned when the session came to an end.

It was the next day, then, that I decided to go in. There was a train from the Colony station at twelve o'clock, and one back in the evening at four. I spoke of it at breakfast, and within an hour Martha and Jim had remembered some buying they had to do in the County Seat, and had decided to go along. They might, they said, step round to the trial themselves for a few minutes if they got through their buying in time. Still that necessity to pretend a casual interest!

A hot ride in the train, a hot walk through blistering unshaded streets, and I reached the courthouse at two o'clock. It seemed almost dark in the dim corridors after the blinding glare outside. An eddy of movement, of interest, led me to the courtroom door.

Air seemed to stop at that door. Inside, pressed forward, packed to the very walls and standing up, the silent attentive crowd

strained forward toward the farther end of that room. Green blinds shut out the sun but not the light. The stifling heat was that of a thicket on summer afternoons.

The quarry brought to cover. The hunt gathered in at the death. And above on his bench the Judge, white-haired and rubicund, the master of the hunt—with a flower in his buttonhole. Below him with their counsel, the defendant and his daughters, side by side. The father, once as tall as his daughters, a little shrunken now. The three dark heads. The dark bright eyes. Now more than ever they looked like creatures brought to bay. Watchful, expectant, still. On the table before them, their three identical hats.

Some colloquy was going on between the State's attorney and the Judge. The Judge leaned down from his bench to hear. The State's attorney—thin, keen, immaculate—stepped back with an amused little smile on his lips and spoke in his sharp, incisive voice.

"Miss Klinger for re-cross." Then he added in a lower tone, "Miss Charlotte Klinger, please, will you take the stand again?"

She rose without haste and made her way past the counsel tables, mounted the two shallow steps to the witness-chair between the Jury and the Judge. The familiar dark print dress invested her now with a curious simple dignity. Her hat lay on her lap—her strong black hair brushed back and gathered in a knot, as women do their hair who always wear a hat. She was handsomer than I had thought, and just a little strange.

Her eyes went to her lawyer, busy shuffling papers and untangling his glasses from the black ribbon by which they hung; then rested upon the attorney for the State.

"I believe, Miss Klinger," his tone was easy, conversational, "I believe you testified in your direct examination that you and your sister found the defendant, your father, mending fence in the pasture, and that he left you there to go to the scene of the tragedy?"

I noted again that odd effect of the question having to reach her first.

"Yes, sir," she said. And again her voice was like her, gentle but perfectly audible in the attentive stillness of that room.

"Were you not afraid—did you not think it might be dangerous for him to go alone to such a place?"

The pause. "Yes, sir, we didn't like to see him go alone."

"Then why did you and your sister not go along?"

"It was men's work," she said.

"I see." His voice was even softer now, more persuasively significant. "You didn't like him to go alone; you felt it might be dangerous. Why, then, did you not go for help when your father failed to return?"

Again the pause. "We would," she said, "but we saw the Company men go down and thought it was all right."

The State's attorney sent a look to the counsel for the defense—the look of a sportsman who cries "Good!" at his adversary's clever play.

Then he turned to the witness again. His tone was crisper now.

"About these men you claim to have seen. You have testified both on direct and cross examination that you saw, in some way saw, two unidentified men attack, kill, and rob the deceased. Will you kindly tell the Court what words, if any, passed between them during those events. Did you not also hear them *speak?"*

"We never hear," she calmly said, "we only see."

"Then see them *now!* Where are they *now?"*

"Objection!" cried the counsel for defense. "No testimony has been offered as to the present whereabouts of these two men."

The Judge leaned forward across the bench. He silently lifted a book, and silently laid it down. Then he lifted another and laid it atop the first. Then slowly and judiciously he spoke.

"The Court has had occasion to admit into the record of this case certain—unusual evidence. The Court has been governed in this course by the highly peculiar nature of the defense here offered. Evidence has been offered concerning an alleged 'vision'

claimed to have been had by this witness, and upon this evidence defendant seeks to base an alibi. The Court deems it therefore only fair to afford this witness an opportunity to prove to this jury her alleged clairvoyant power. The Court therefore overrules the objection of the defendant, and requests the witness to state whether or not, since the alleged first vision of which she has testified, she has ever, clairvoyantly or otherwise, seen those two men again."

His eyes met those of the girl in the witness chair.

Slowly her eyes left his.

"No," her answer came, almost inaudibly.

He leaned toward her across his folded arms.

"*Try*—try to see them now."

The whole room held its breath.

And upon that stillness her gentle, despairing answer fell.

"We never *can* see when we try. We've *been* trying ever since."

It lay upon that stillness like the weightless hand of truth.

At last, as if from some vision he himself had seen, the Judge drew slowly back.

"Proceed," he said.

"No more questions," said the attorney for the State.

"No questions," echoed the counsel for defense.

"That's all," said the Judge.

The girl in the witness-chair rose.

"One moment!" The State's attorney raised his hand. "One more question, please, just one."

He waited while she took the chair again. Waited then a moment before he spoke in that deliberately slow and careful voice.

"You and your sister are—very much devoted to your father, are you not?"

"Yes, sir," she said, and seemed to wait.

"That's all," said the attorney for the State.

She waited still until he said again, "That's all"—and then, bewildered, rose and made her way down from the witness stand, past the long counsel tables to her vacant chair.

"Next witness!" called the Judge, matter of fact, peremptory.

A stir ran through the court. It breathed again.

"Mrs. McAllister!" announced the counsel for the defense and stood to receive her as she came through the crowd, a nervous little figure in her Sunday best.

Nervous but determined, she took her place and faced the court. Led by the kindly questioning, her voice growing steadier as she gained confidence, she began to tell the story of the message brought to her by the Klinger girls.

The attorney for the State seemed bored. Presently he arose.

"I object, your Honor, to this testimony as incompetent, irrelevant, and immaterial."

"What is the purpose of the testimony of this witness?" asked the Judge.

"The purpose, your Honor," said the counsel for defense, "assigned by the Court in overruling my objection a few moments ago."

Again the look of sportsmen passed between the lawyers—and the witness was allowed to proceed as before. She told her story simply, in homely poignant words that somehow touched the heart. And when she had finished and counsel said, "Take the witness," the State's attorney was kindness itself, as one who regrets a duty unavoidable.

"Tell me, Mrs. McAllister, have you any means of knowing that these young women did not receive some word of your son's death before they came to you?"

"Oh, no, but they didn't!" she cried.

"But have you any *means* of knowing it?"

"They couldn't have," she said.

He did not press the point but left it there.

"You say, Mrs. McAllister, that until your son went to the city he had lived with you in the Colony?"

She nodded, "Yes."

"Did he know the two young women called 'the Klinger girls'?"

She seemed to hesitate at that. "Why yes, sir, I suppose he did."

"Intimately?" The word picked out between two silences.

"Oh no, sir! I don't think he knew them much at all."

The prosecutor's brows went up. There showed upon his firm thin lips a faint, uncomfortable smile. He leaned a little forward now.

"What did your son die of, Mrs. McAllister?"

"Why," she said and wavered, then went on, "he just hadn't been feeling right for a couple of days, and all of a sudden that last night he took worse, and in the morning he died. It was his stomach, though—he must have eaten something, the doctor said."

"And before that, had he been well?"

"Oh yes, sir! He was a fine strong boy."

"Do you know whether or not during that week your son had received any visitors?"

"Visitors?"

"*Women* visitors, perhaps. . . ."

Something black had entered the court. Something black and malevolent. He, that cool and alert intelligence; he, the destroyer of visions—what were these but "visions" he himself produced! From what cold diabolical chamber had they sprung?

Through them came the voice of counsel for the defense, booming his objections to the court. "No evidence has been offered here—no evidence has been offered!"

"Objection sustained!" said the court. But the "vision" was not exorcised.

"That's all," said the State's attorney.

"All," echoed counsel for the defense.

"You may go, Mrs. McAllister," said the Judge.

And the meager timid figure, brave in its Sunday best, also went bewildered from the stand.

Next came Orville, a knot of a man, who faced the questioner with sullen belligerence. For Orville had come against his will. "He'd be damned," Orville had said, "if he was goin' to be made a fool of in a court of law." But he was also afraid of lying in a "court of law." So he answered his questions in monosyllables. "Sure," he would answer, scratching his scraggly white mustache—"sure they told me where to look." And this with averted know-

ing eyes, as if he would have liked to add, "I s'pose they *put* 'em there." For here was a man who had told his story until he thought it was a lie, embarrassed now to have it proven true.

The State's attorney waited for him, smiling to himself.

At counsel's "Take the witness," I felt a touch upon my arm. Martha stood beside me, saying we must go if we were to catch the train.

I asked how long they had been there and she said they had just come in a few minutes ago. But I always wondered how long those "few minutes" might have been.

As we stepped from that long dim corridor out into the street, the blazing ball of the sun before us blinded us with light.

We talked little of the trial. I could only echo Jim's eloquent "Looks bad for 'em—pretty bad."

And so it did. And so it was "bad for 'em" in the end.

The verdict came in Friday. "Guilty," as any sane jury would have said. Twenty years in prison for the father. The daughters let go free.

"They did their best to save him," everybody said.

"Twenty years!" said Martha, "That's as good as life."

And so it was, or so it would have been if there had not happened then the strangest thing of all. To me at least it seemed the strangest thing—and somehow strangely right.

For the horse trader did not go to prison after all. Oh, nothing supernatural—he was not spirited away. He took a cold, as you or I might do, in that overheated stuffy court and, within a week after the verdict, was dead of pneumonia.

The season of boisterous days and magical windless evenings after them had come again to the Colony. Again Martha tended her precious bed of flowers, and again in the quiet evening light I saw them coming, "the Klinger girls," exactly as I had seen them first—riding their strong deliberate horses along the narrow sandy road. Sidewise, facing us, their dark print dresses hanging straight and full from their long fine waists to their feet. And as they

passed, the measured effortless footfalls of their horses falling soundless on the yielding sand, their dark eyes rested upon us calmly, turning evenly with their passage as the eyes of pictures seem to turn.

"Good-by!" It was Martha's voice.

"Good-by!" They echoed in unison. And rode on.

Beside me, Martha on her knees was motionless, as if held by the strangeness of that good-by.

"They're going away," said Martha, her voice soft on the stillness.

"Away?"

She nodded. "They say *he* wants them to."

I could still see them a moment before they vanished in the quiet evening light. An illusion of figures carried forward to no destination more real than the remote and unimaginable termination of a myth.

INNOCENCE

By

ROSE WILDER LANE

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As new experiences come to us, we interpret them in the light of related earlier ones. Because a child's background of experience is very different from that of an adult, the two will put very different interpretations upon what they see and hear. In her story, the author has managed to hold the scenes up to us so that we see them against both our own background of experience and that of the little girl.

It is because Rose Wilder Lane did this so well that she won Second Prize with INNOCENCE in one of the annual O. Henry Memorial Prize awards.

ROSE WILDER LANE is a young woman, but she has seen much of the United States and Europe. She was born in De Smet, South Dakota, attended high school in Louisiana, lived in California, went by stages to Maine, returned to California, did publicity work in Europe during the war, visited the Balkans, Egypt, the Near East, Persia, and Transcaucasian Russia, and is now living in Missouri. She says she is going to build a house in Albania. "Give me," she writes, "my Albanian house, a shepherd on the hillside fluting melody to the stars, a muezzin from the minarets calling 'God is God,' and a sunset on the purple peaks of the Balkans, and I ask no more."

Mrs. Lane has already had an active literary career. She spent some time on the staff of the San Francisco *Bulletin,* and her newspaper work started her on her activity as a writer. She is the author of novels, articles, and short stories, and has made translations. Her books include the following: *Henry Ford's Own Story, White Shadows in the South Seas* (with Frederick O'Brien), *The Making of Herbert Hoover;* and her three novels: *Diverging Roads, He Was a Man,* and *Hill-Billy.*

INNOCENCE

By Rose Wilder Lane

WHEN Mary Alice came quite awake her mother was rubbing her face with a cold, wet cloth. They were in the little room at the end of the car; the floor was shaking like the skin of a horse that tries to get rid of a fly, and underneath the floor the wheels were talking. Clickety-clack! they said, Clickety-clack!

"Wake up, baby," Mother said. "We'll be there in a few minutes." She turned Mary Alice around and began buttoning up. A little light ran along the edge of the shining wash-basin; when Mary Alice turned her head the little light ran away very quickly, when she turned her head the other way it stopped suddenly and ran back.

"Stand still, dear!" Mother said. The best, beautiful pink dress came jerkily down over Mary Alice's head and was buttoned. Then Mother turned her around again and pushed into place the thin, curved red comb that held her hair tight. Mother's eyes were clear, like water, and full of happiness. Her two hands gave Mary Alice's face an excited little squeeze.

"We're going to see Father and Uncle Charley again. Aren't you glad?" she said.

"Will there be pickaninnies?" Mary Alice asked, anxiously. Pickaninnies were children as black as coal; Mother had promised that she would see them in Florida. Mother said yes, there would be pickaninnies.

Mary Alice sat on the chair while Mother dressed. When she sat on the edge of the chair her legs disappeared; when she pulled herself back two feet popped up in front of her. That was because her legs bent; her legs had hinges in them, like doors. Mother's hair was very long, and no one could see at once all the lights

that scampered through it. Mother's hands were going so fast that they were out of breath, and fluttered. When they came to a snarl they jerked at it, but Mother never cried. Her face in the glass smiled at Mary Alice.

"You remember Uncle Charley, don't you?" she said.

Mary Alice remembered Uncle Charley. When they lived at Grandfather's he used to put her high on the big backs of the horses at the watering trough. She remembered his legs, going into the pile of hay in the car that had taken Father and him down south to Florida. First his arms and head went in, and then one leg and then the other, and that was the last of Uncle Charley. Then there was nothing but hay. She must not tell any one that Uncle Charley was in the hay, because they were poor, and if people knew that Uncle Charley was going to Florida with Father and the horses and the cow they would not let him go. For a long time Mary Alice had not spoken of Uncle Charley, but she remembered him. He was big and strong and always laughing.

When the train stopped they got down the high car steps and were alone in a gray light. Mother looked anxiously this way and that, and her hand hurt Mary Alice's. Then she dropped it, and Father was there. "Hello! Here you are!" he said. He and Mother looked at each other, and it was as though they were together in a warm little space. Mary Alice was outside, chilly and uncomfortable. She tugged at Mother's sleeve and said, "Where are the pickaninnies?" Then they laughed and took her into the warmth.

"Didn't Charley come?" said Mother, and Father swung Mary Alice into the air and kissed her. His face was suddenly close and big, a brown, prickly face with deep creases in the cheeks.

The horses and wagon waited by the platform. Mary Alice was swung high over the wheel into the seat, Father and Mother climbed up beside her, and Father clucked to the horses. The horses walked quickly, jerking their heads, and little plops of white dust rose from their feet. They passed a store and some

low, unpainted houses with wide porches. Strange trees grew in the yards. Their branches grew as though they meant something strange and frightening; their leaves were like flat green hands with wide fingers, and their fruit was black. In one of these trees was a black boy. He sat on a branch and dangled black legs and with one hand he picked a black fruit. His large mouth was very full of white teeth, and he bit the black fruit with them; he bit it through, and laughed. Mary Alice could not look away from him; her head turned slowly and her eyes stayed fixed on him for a long time.

"Here we are, in the piney woods!" said Father. The white road went curving between straight, tall gray trees that had no branches. Far overhead their green-black tops whispered breathlessly, without stopping, telling something terrifying. The gray trunks stood still in a gray light; they knew, but they were silent, and the pale ground looked up at them. A smell of dampness and of wet paint-brushes was in the air.

Father's cheerful voice sounded loud and false. Mother's voice was low and unrelenting, as though she were talking about telling lies. Uncle Charley was her little brother.

"You must tell me what it is," she said.

Mary Alice watched the horses' ears. They turned this way and that, and reminded Mary Alice of birds sitting on a fence.

Suddenly Mother cried out, as though someone had struck her. Mary Alice looked up quickly. Mother's face was broken. Mother was crying, and nothing was safe. Terror and strangeness reached out of the gray woods and seized Mary Alice, and she shrieked, and there was nothing anywhere but sobbing and screams. Father was talking to her, but she could not hear him; and he was holding her, but she could not feel that he was near. Then he was putting something into her hand and telling her to taste it. It was sweet and salty. Sugar cane, he said; she was to suck it. It was smooth and green and round, like a large stick of candy. The wagon was still jolting on, and she sat tasting the sugar cane through her sobs until she fell asleep. She fell asleep feeling a

blackness of something that had got Uncle Charley and made Mother cry.

But when she woke there he was. His big hands were holding her in the air, and he was laughing up at her. His face was red-brown and his eyes were very blue, and beneath the edge of his blue shirt was the strip of pinky-white skin; he had just come in from the fields and was putting her up on the big horse. No, there was the wagon and a strange, zig-zag fence and many large, fresh chips scattered around a new house in the piney woods. She was in Florida, and Uncle Charley was here, too, and safe.

"Oh!" she cried, hugging his neck tight. "Mother cried about you, and I was afraid!"

The last sob came unexpectedly out of her throat, and then she felt a queer stillness. She slid to the ground. There was a strange woman, a black-haired, black-eyed, red-cheeked woman in a beautiful, bright-red dress. She was fascinating, like Grandfather's big brown horse that lived behind bars and had once killed a man.

"This is your new Aunt Molly, Mary Alice," said Mother. Mother's face was smiling, but Mother was not smiling. Mary Alice took tight hold of Mother's brown skirt and held out a hand.

"How do you do, Aunt Molly?" she said, carefully.

"The other hand, dear," said Mother.

Mary Alice saw Aunt Molly's bare feet, bare and brown and dusty with white dust. She looked up the beautiful red skirt to Aunt Molly's hands that were on Aunt Molly's hips, and on up to the bright-colored face. The face tipped back, a thick white throat came up out of the red collar, and suddenly Aunt Molly laughed a short, queer laugh.

"Well, nyow," she said, "I'm right proud to meet you," and she shook Mary Alice's hand as though she were making fun. But it was the right hand. Aunt Molly's red lips curled and showed her white teeth; she was like the big brown horse laying back his ears, and Mary Alice backed quickly against Mother. Everything was

wrong and she did not know why; she only wanted to get away, and, turning, she hid her face against Mother and shut her eyes.

Then they were all going into the house. The house was made of new yellow boards and smelled good. There was a room with a cook stove and table, and a room with the big bed and Mary Alice's cot. It was a nice house, only Uncle Charley did not live with them any more. He lived in another house with Aunt Molly. Aunt Molly took him away, and at the gate he stopped to look back at Mother. Mother and Mary Alice stood in the doorway and waved good-bye to Uncle Charley, but Aunt Molly did not look back. She walked fast down the road, and her red skirt switched behind her like a tail.

Mother was very busy and did not say a word. She unpacked the trunk and put on her blue apron and let down the long braid of her hair that stayed in a knot only when she was playing grown-up. For Mother was not really grown-up, like Father; she liked to sing and dress dolls and play games with toes. Only to-day she did not feel like playing. She bathed Mary Alice sternly in the tin washbasin, and swept, and got supper. Her forehead was pulled into little lumps, and her mouth was queer and tight. When Father came in from doing the chores she dished up the potatoes and cut the johnnycake and set Mary Alice on the Bible in the chair without saying anything until Father put his arms around her, and then she cuddled her head beside his chin and cried again.

"Oh, how could he? How could he?" she said.

"He didn't do it," said Father, bitterly. "He's a Northerner, and she wanted him. She got around him somehow. They say she drugged him."

Mary Alice sat amazed, holding her knife straight up in her fist. "Drugged," she said to herself. "Dragged. I drug; I dragged. She dragged herself around him. She drugged herself around him." It made a song in her mind and she began to sing it, pounding on the table with the handle of the knife until Mother startled her with a sharp, "Stop it, Mary Alice!"

Mary Alice went to sleep every night hearing the piney woods whispering together, and when she woke in her cot they were still whispering. The piney woods had no leaves, only long things like red and brown darning needles. She must not go far from the house—there were snakes in the piney woods. She might go with Mother to bring water from the spring. The water came out in the ground and made a little pool that twisted in the middle, then it ran stealthily away into shadows. The air was thick and mouldy with smells, and by the water grew a fascinating, horrible plant that ate flies.

Uncle Charley came every day to help Father dig a well outside the kitchen door. He was busy and did not feel like playing. He dug himself down to the waist and then down to the shoulders, and then he went down into the ground in a bucket on a rope. He sent up the bucket full of red mud, and Father dumped it. Mary Alice played with the mud and made things; she set them in a row in the sun and they turned to rock. Mother said she was making mud pies, but they were not pies, they were just shapes she thought of. At noon Uncle Charley came out of the ground and washed and ate dinner. He said it was like old times to eat honest-to-gosh cooking again, and Mother looked sad. Uncle Charley should not say honest-to-gosh; it was a bad word.

"Will you stay to supper, Charley?" Mother said.

Uncle Charley made marks with his toe in the red mud. "Hang it all! yes," he said.

After supper he sat with Father on the doorstep and Mother sat near them in the rocking-chair and sang songs to them; they forgot it was bedtime. Aunt Molly came up the road in the moonlight, her face and her arms and her feet were white in the moonlight, and she stood at the edge of the piney woods and called:

"Charley!"

Mother asked her to come in, but she said, "No, thanks; I reckon we-all'll be gitting along home."

Uncle Charley did not come any more to dig, and Father and Mother talked about it. Mother said they must be nice to Aunt

Molly. She did not want to, but she pinned up her hair and put on her sunbonnet and she and Mary Alice went up the white road. Sunshine slanted through the piney woods and struck the white road. Lizards lay on the zig-zag fence waggling their sleek throats, and ants went across the road in crawling lines, little red lines and big black lines. White dust was on the toes of Mary Alice's little shoes and Mother's big shoes.

They came to Uncle Charley's house. It was made of logs, and skins were spread out on the walls. The ground around it was bare and hard and hens were walking about. Large bony dogs with flapping ears stood up and growled, but Aunt Molly came to the door and said:

"Hesh up, you ornery dawgs! I'm right proud to see you-all," she said, looking at Mother's calico dress. "We-all ain't fine like Northerners, but sech as we got is good enough for we-uns. Light 'n' come in."

Mother laughed as though she had been running; she said polite things while they went into the house. It was logs on the inside, too, and bits of daylight came through between them. Women and many children were sitting around the fireplace. They were all barefooted and wore queer gray dresses, and they all looked at Mother's dress and at Mary Alice's shoes. A woman put out a long skinny arm and pulled Mary Alice close to her. The woman's face was all deep-brown wrinkles and her chewing mouth was somehow like a frog jumping.

"Nyow here's a right peart little girl," she said. "I'd give a pretty for a little girl like you."

Mary Alice shyly said nothing, leaning against the woman's friendly knee.

Aunt Molly sat on her heels by the fireplace, mixing cornmeal and water with her fingers. She took handfuls of it and patted them flat between her hands; she made a print of her hands on each side. Mary Alice admired it very much. Then Aunt Molly laid the yellow cake in the ashes and covered it with ashes and made another.

Each woman had only one or two long yellow teeth, but they never stopped brushing them. They dipped little sticks into boxes of brown dust, and chewed, and spit into the fireplace. Mary Alice had never seen any one spit so far and so well. There was a box on the knee beside her, and she looked into it, politely. The woman understood; she dipped her stick into the box and twirled it until it was brown, and offered it to Mary Alice. Mary Alice took it eagerly, but Mother's eyes opened wide, and then she shook her head.

"She's too little yet, I'm afraid," Mother said, and her blue eyes were very blue in her pink face. "Thank the lady nicely, and put it back, Mary Alice," and Mother looked around at the faces timidly.

"My children's dipped snuff sence they was weanlings," said the woman.

Mary Alice wanted to cry, but she let the woman take back the stick. Aunt Molly stood up, and made again that frightening sound like a laugh. Mary Alice felt queer, as though she were big and Mother little and something wanted to hurt Mother; she went and stood with her back against Mother.

The men came tramping in. They were Aunt Molly's brothers —tall, loud men, even bigger than Uncle Charley. They hung their guns on the wall and were noisy; they slapped their big hands on Aunt Molly's shoulders, and she laughed. Aunt Molly's black eyes seemed hot, her black hair was alive. It did not hang limp like the other women's but each lock of it curled and twisted into the air. She did not look at Uncle Charley, and he did not speak to Mother. All the women sat by the fire while the men ate, and Aunt Molly went back and forth with dishes. When her feet touched the floor they seemed to bound. The corn cakes smelled good and Mary Alice was hungry, but she was afraid of the big men, and even Mother seemed strange.

Uncle Charley was the last of the men to go. He stood in the doorway turning his hat in his fingers and not looking at anybody. Then he went away, and all the women got up and began putting

the children on the benches by the table and finding places themselves. Someone filled Mary Alice's tin dish with grease and meat and corn cake; there was a confusing noise of voices and tin cups rattling, a woman slapped a boy and he howled, and suddenly Mary Alice cried:

"I don't want nasty black things to eat with! Why aren't they white, Mother, like ours?"

Everybody looked at her, and Mother reached down and took her under one arm and carried her out of the house; Mary Alice did not know why. Mother did not listen to anything she said; Mother set her down hard and held her head under one arm and lifted up her skirts and struck her from behind. Mary Alice yelled with amazement and terror. Mother struck her more than once, and then said:

"Now come in this house, and eat, and don't let me hear another word out of you!"

Mary Alice sat bowed on the bench and swallowed as much as she could. She was most miserable. Afterward they went home, and all down the white road Mary Alice did not say anything, only she looked up at Mother now and then and felt confused. When they got home she hurried into the house and sat alone in a corner, holding her rag doll.

The days were forlorn. Uncle Charley did not come, Father did not laugh, and Mother never tickled toes any more when she pulled the covers off the cot in the mornings. Father had finished the well; there was no more red clay, and in the yard there were only lizards and ants to watch.

One night Mary Alice had a dream. She dreamed that someone came tapping at the door in the night. Father said, "Who's there?" and Uncle Charley's voice answered, very low. Father got up and lighted the lamp in the kitchen and Mother got up. Mary Alice thought she sat up in bed and looked through the door into the kitchen.

Mother's long braid hung down her wrapper, and Mother said to Father: "No! I won't do it, Howard. Everything we own in

the world is in this farm. You won't be driven off it while I have anything to say about it."

Father's wrinkles were deep black marks on his face above the lamp. He said, "Well, but Mary——"

"I don't believe it, anyway!" Mother said. "She couldn't hate us like that. What have we ever done to her?"

Uncle Charley's voice was there, but Mary Alice could not see Uncle Charley. Mother turned quickly and spoke toward the voice.

"Well, why don't you?" she said. "You don't belong with such people. You used to be the finest boy in Webster County, and what's she doing to you? You know it isn't true; you know I've never said a word to turn you against her, but I say it now. Yes, leave her! Married or not married, there's some things wrong in the sight of God. If you'll come with us, Charley, we'll go. We'll go back home."

Then Mary Alice heard the piney woods whispering, and she was frightened and cold and wanted to call to Mother, but did not dare.

Uncle Charley said, "It's too late, Mary."

Mother said: "It isn't too late. Yes, I say it. I don't care if you'd married her twenty times——"

Then Uncle Charley said a strange thing. He said: "Mary, you don't know—you don't know what she'd do. The moon's shining." Mother's face went all still and hard in the lamplight. Then she was out of sight, and Mary Alice heard her crying voice, "Oh, Charley, don't! don't!" and a terrible, hoarse, gasping sound. Father coughed, and then he grew very large and very small and the terrible sounds went on and on, until Mary Alice opened her eyes. The sounds were only the whispering of the piney woods and Mother was combing her hair in the morning.

"Where is Uncle Charley?" said Mary Alice. "Mother, is the moon shining?"

"What do you mean?" Mother exclaimed. "You've been dreaming, Mary Alice. Nobody's been here. Moonshining is a bad word.

You must never say it again." Mary Alice's bewilderment opened her mouth, but Mother was so stern that she closed it again.

After breakfast Mother took Mary Alice between her knees and spoke to her seriously. "I want you to listen to me, Mary Alice," she said. "You must never eat anything that any one gives you. Never eat anything until I give it to you, or Father. Do you understand?"

"Oh, Mother," said Mary Alice, "aren't you ever going to tickle my toes again, ever, ever, any more?"

Mother scrunched her up tight in her warm, clean-smelling calico lap and arms, laughing and catching her breath. But in a minute she was stern again. "Listen, dear. You must never, never eat anything until I say you may. Do you understand? Tell me, Mary Alice."

"I must never eat anything until you say I may," said Mary Alice, remembering hard. And next morning Mother tickled her toes, but it was not as it used to be, and Mary Alice did not want Mother to do it because she was asked.

One could play in the garden, putting the peanut blossoms to bed. Mary Alice had carefully picked up the peanut blossoms and dusted them, until Father found her doing it. He laughed then, and called Mother to laugh, too. Peanut blossoms must dig down into the ground to make peanuts. So now she put them in little holes and buried them—the peanut blossoms were glad because she was helping them.

"Well, I guess we'll have to live on the peanuts," Father said. The cow was dead. He had found her in the piney woods with her legs cut, so he had had to kill her, and there would not be any little calf. Mother looked sick. She said: "How can human beings do such things! But I won't back down for them," she said; "it's like going away and leaving Charley."

There were no more peanut blossoms. Under the ground there were peanuts, and Father was digging them up; some day Mother would roast them. The banana plant in the yard had grown taller than Mary Alice; its broad leaves hung limp and warm in the

sun. Beneath it on the ground a moth fluttered; it was alive, but it was covered with ants. The ants were eating it. Mary Alice got a grass stem and fought them. She poked them off as fast as she could, but they kept coming, and the poor moth fluttered. She must not touch moths, a touch brushed the weeny little feathers off their wings, and hurt them. Mary Alice fought the ants as fast as she could, but in a moment the moth jerked, twisted up its legs, and died. Mary Alice stood up. Aunt Molly was leaning on the fence, watching her from the shadows of a sunbonnet. She did not speak, but beckoned with her hand.

"See what I've fetched you, honey," she said, like a secret. She uncurled her fingers, and on her palm was a little red ball. "It's spruce gum," she said. "It grows in the piney woods. Your Aunt Molly's fetched it and chawed it all soft for you."

She felt warm and grateful toward Aunt Molly. But Aunt Molly's eyes were strange; their look came out of them and pushed Mary Alice's gaze down. She could not look at Aunt Molly. She turned the red ball over in her hand.

"Chaw it," said Aunt Molly. "Chaw it."

It was only to chaw; it was not something to eat. Mary Alice lifted it to her mouth, and then took it down and looked at it again. But it was not to eat. The screen door slammed and she looked up guiltily.

"Mother, see!" she said. "See what Aunt Molly gave me! Mother, can I eat it? It's gum."

Mother looked at Aunt Molly. Aunt Molly stood up straight, and the sunbonnet fell back; her face came out hard and bright, and she smiled at Mother.

"Yes, Mary Alice, you may have it," said Mother, and just as joy leaped in Mary Alice, Mother's hand came down quickly and took the red ball. "After supper," she said.

Mary Alice looked up, protesting, and was struck silent. Something vast and terrible was there, in the air, invisible, coming out of the eyes of Aunt Molly and Mother. Mary Alice's legs stumbled as Mother led her by the hand into the house.

Mother sat down and took Mary Alice into her lap. She rocked her for a while and then said:

"Mary Alice, I promised you the gum, and Mother always keeps her promises. The gum is yours. Will you give it to me for a pan of peanuts?"

Mary Alice thought. She thought of the red ball, how good it looked, and she thought of hot, crackling peanuts.

"A large pan?" she asked.

"The black baking pan," said Mother.

"All right," said Mary Alice. Mother got the black baking pan and filled it with peanuts. She put the pan in the oven and shut the oven door. Then she went out. Mary Alice sat on a stool and waited. She looked at the sunshine on the floor and at the ironing board laid on the backs of the two chairs; she heard the piney woods whispering, and the safe sound of the teakettle. Now and then she sniffed. She smelled the peanuts. She smelled them very loud. She began to smell them anxiously; they smelled burning. She was trying to open the oven door when suddenly someone seized her. Mother had her tight; Mother was shaking and sobbing and laughing, her face was wet and twisted against Mary Alice's. Mary Alice shrieked aloud and struggled, screaming.

Father came in, running, the hoe in his hand. Mother cried: "She died! She's dead!" and laughed horribly.

Father shook them both. "O my God! O my God! What is it?" he said. "Answer me!"

Mother stumbled across the floor, carrying Mary Alice to the doorway. Outside, on the stain of red mud, the Plymouth Rock hen lay dead with her head on.

"I threw it to her, and she swallowed it, and died," said Mother.

And Mary Alice sincerely wept, because she had liked the hen, too. Father and Mother comforted her, and talked over her head.

There was no supper that night. Mary Alice was given a piece of bread and butter, and she was not to be put to bed. Father had hitched up the horses, and they were going back to Grandfather's. Trunks and boxes were packed and piled in the wagon, with the

stove and table and chairs and the sacks of peanuts. As soon as it was dark they started.

The piney woods were shadowy in the moonlight and things without shapes moved through them; the horses' feet made dull, thudding sounds and the wagon creaked, the harness jingled. They had gone a long way, but Mary Alice was still awake when the horses shied and someone was holding on to the wheel and looking upward.

"Good-bye!" Uncle Charley panted. "I just made it in time across the hill way. I thought I'd get there and fight 'em with you. But it's better for you this way. Don't stop. Keep going. They'll be at the house in half an hour. Good-bye."

Mother leaned down to him. "Get in and come with us," she said. "Oh, Charley, how'll I ever stand it? We'll get you off, somehow, Charley. I can't go away and leave you here."

The piney woods were still, listening.

"God! Mary, I can't," Uncle Charley said. "You don't know her. She's got me. She'd have the revenuers after me to-morrow. I—I ain't got the nerve any more. You better hurry on. Good-bye, I—— Good-bye, Mary!"

Then he was gone, and Father put his arm around Mother and clucked to the horses. Mary Alice thought at first that Mother was crying, but she was not; she was quite still.

"Aren't we going to see Uncle Charley again?" Mary Alice asked.

"Hush, Mary Alice!" said Father.

The piney woods were filled with strangeness; the gray, straight trunks moved stealthily, and the road was a glimmer that went out in darkness ahead. But Mary Alice slipped away from all vague wonderings into the coziness of sleep.

BECAUSE OF THE DOLLARS

By

JOSEPH CONRAD

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The lure of the far, colorful parts of the world is immemorial. Names like Kandahar, Ispahan, and Kanchenjunga have magic in them against which no one of us is proof. Among the human figures that are woven into this story, there are only three that are done in bright tones; but the rest of the tapestry has the splendid colors of the East.

JOSEPH CONRAD (KORZENIOWSKI) is one of the most romantic figures in English literature. He is recognized as a master of English prose style, and yet he knew no English till he was twenty. He was born in Poland, and when he began to live with English people he dropped the un-English last part of his name. He died in 1924.

Conrad, as a boy in Poland, longed to sail the sea and to visit the far parts of the world. The lad began to satisfy his desires by leaving home at the age of eighteen and shipping at Marseilles as a sailor on a French ship. But he preferred English sailors and English ships, and finally became a mate on an English vessel. For a number of years Conrad was an English sea captain in active service, much of the time in the picturesque East. In the course of a trip up the Congo river he contracted a fever, from the effects of which he was never quite free.

He felt the urge to write, and in his free time on shipboard wrote his first novel, *Almayer's Folly*—in English. From then on, Conrad remained a literary man, finally leaving the sea to live and write in the England that he loved. Mrs. Conrad is English, and the sons are thoroughgoing young Englishmen.

Conrad wrote, for the most part, of the colorful parts of the world; and he wrote in a colorful way. His work is thoughtful but vigorous. It is not to be read without some effort, but it richly repays the slight concentration required of the reader. Conrad has a strange, almost uncanny, ability to show us that life is essentially picturesque and noble. The note of the *necessity for loyalty* is somehow heard as an overtone in all his books—at least in his stories of the sea, where he is at his best. His descriptions are among the most vivid in English literature.

Conrad's novels include *Victory, Almayer's Folly, An Outcast of the Islands, The Rescue, Nostromo, Lord Jim, The Nigger of the Narcissus.* His short stories are nearly all of unusual length, so that there are not more than a half dozen in any of the volumes in which they have been collected. Some of these volumes are *A Set of Six, 'Twixt Land and Sea, Within the Tides,* and *The Shorter Tales of Joseph Conrad.*

BECAUSE OF THE DOLLARS

By JOSEPH CONRAD

I

WHILE we were hanging about near the water's edge, as sailors idling ashore will do (it was in the open space before the Harbour Office of a great eastern port), a man came towards us from the "front" of business houses, aiming obliquely at the landing steps. He attracted my attention because in the movement of figures in white drill suits on the pavement from which he stepped, his costume, the usual tunic and trousers, being made of light grey flannel, made him noticeable.

I had time to observe him. He was stout, but he was not grotesque. His face was round and smooth, his complexion very fair. On his nearer approach I saw a little moustache made all the fairer by a good many white hairs. And he had, for a stout man, quite a good chin. In passing us he exchanged nods with the friend I was with and smiled.

My friend was Hollis, the fellow who had so many adventures and had known so many queer people in that part of the (more or less) gorgeous East in the days of his youth. He said: "That's a good man. I don't mean good in the sense of smart or skilful in his trade. I mean a really *good* man."

I turned round at once to look at the phenomenon. The "really *good* man" had a very broad back. I saw him signal a sampan to come alongside, get into it, and go off in the direction of a cluster of local steamers anchored close inshore.

I said: "He's a seaman, isn't he?"

"Yes. Commands that biggish dark-green steamer: *'Sissie*—Glasgow.' He has never commanded anything else but the *'Sissie*

—Glasgow,' only it wasn't always the same *Sissie*. The first he had was about half the length of this one, and we used to tell poor Davidson that she was a size too small for him. Even at that time Davidson had bulk. We warned him he would get callosities on his shoulders and elbows because of the tight fit of his command. And Davidson could well afford the smiles he gave us for our chaff. He made lots of money in her. She belonged to a portly Chinaman resembling a mandarin in a picture-book, with goggles and thin drooping moustaches, and as dignified as only a Celestial knows how to be.

"The best of Chinamen as employers is that they have such gentlemanly instincts. Once they become convinced that you are a straight man, they give you their unbounded confidence. You simply can't do wrong, then. And they are pretty quick judges of character, too. Davidson's Chinaman was the first to find out his worth, on some theoretical principle. One day in his counting-house, before several white men he was heard to declare: 'Captain Davidson is a good man.' And that settled it. After that you couldn't tell if it was Davidson who belonged to the Chinaman or the Chinaman who belonged to Davidson. It was he who, shortly before he died, ordered in Glasgow the new *Sissie* for Davidson to command."

We walked into the shade of the Harbour Office and leaned our elbows on the parapet of the quay.

"She was really meant to comfort poor Davidson," continued Hollis. "Can you fancy anything more naïvely touching than this old mandarin spending several thousand pounds to console his white man? Well, there she is. The old mandarin's sons have inherited her, and Davidson with her; and he commands her; and what with his salary and trading privileges he makes a lot of money; and everything is as before; and Davidson even smiles—you have seen it? Well, the smile's the only thing which isn't as before."

"Tell me, Hollis," I asked, "what do you mean by good in this connection?"

"Well, there are men who are born good just as others are born witty. What I mean is his nature. No simpler, more scrupulously delicate soul had ever lived in such a—a—comfortable envelope. How we used to laugh at Davidson's fine scruples! In short, he's thoroughly humane, and I don't imagine there can be much of any other sort of goodness that counts on this earth. And as he's that with a shade of particular refinement, I may well call him a *'really* good man.'"

I knew from old that Hollis was a firm believer in the final value of shades. And I said: "I see"—because I really did see Hollis's Davidson in the sympathetic stout man who had passed us a little while before. But I remembered that at the very moment he smiled his placid face appeared veiled in melancholy—a sort of spiritual shadow. I went on:

"Who on earth has paid him off for being so fine by spoiling his smile?"

"That's quite a story, and I will tell it to you if you like. Confound it! It's quite a surprising one, too. Surprising in every way, but mostly in the way it knocked over poor Davidson—and apparently only because he is such a good sort. He was telling me all about it only a few days ago. He said that when he saw these four fellows with their heads in a bunch over the table, he at once didn't like it. He didn't like it at all. You mustn't suppose that Davidson is a soft fool. These men——

"But I had better begin at the beginning. We must go back to the first time the old dollars had been called in by our Government in exchange for a new issue. Just about the time when I left these parts to go home for a long stay. Every trader in the islands was thinking of getting his old dollars sent up here in time, and the demand for empty French wine cases—you know the dozen of vermouth or claret size—was something unprecedented. The custom was to pack the dollars in little bags of a hundred each. I don't know how many bags each case would hold. A good lot. Pretty tidy sums must have been moving afloat just then. But let

us get away from here. Won't do to stay in the sun. Where could we——? I know! let us go to those tiffin-rooms over there."

We moved over accordingly. Our appearance in the long empty room at that early hour caused visible consternation amongst the China boys. But Hollis led the way to one of the tables between the windows screened by rattan blinds. A brilliant half-light trembled on the ceiling, on the whitewashed walls, bathed the multitude of vacant chairs and tables in a peculiar, stealthy glow.

"All right. We will get something to eat when it's ready," he said, waving the anxious Chinaman waiter aside. He took his temples touched with grey between his hands, leaning over the table to bring his face, his dark, keen eyes, closer to mine.

"Davidson then was commanding the steamer *Sissie*—the little one which we used to chaff him about. He ran her alone, with only the Malay serang for a deck officer. The nearest approach to another white man on board of her was the engineer, a Portuguese half-caste, as thin as a lath and quite a youngster at that. For all practical purposes Davidson was managing that command of his single-handed; and of course this was known in the port. I am telling you of it because the fact had its influence on the developments you shall hear of presently.

"His steamer, being so small, could go up tiny creeks and into shallow bays and through reefs and over sandbanks, collecting produce, where no other vessel but a native craft would think of venturing. It is a paying game, often. Davidson was known to visit in her places that no one else could find and that hardly anybody had ever heard of.

"The old dollars being called in, Davidson's Chinaman thought that the *Sissie* would be just the thing to collect them from small traders in the less frequented parts of the Archipelago. It's a good business. Such cases of dollars are dumped aft in the ship's lazarette, and you get good freight for very little trouble and space.

"Davidson, too, thought it was a good idea; and together they

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Tiffin: light meal, lunch.
Serang: the boatswain of a native crew in the East.

made up a list of his calls on his next trip. Then Davidson (he had naturally the chart of his voyages in his head) remarked that on his way back he might look in at a certain settlement up a mere creek, where a poor sort of white man lived in a native village. Davidson pointed out to his Chinaman that the fellow was certain to have some rattans to ship.

"'Probably enough to fill her forward,' said Davidson. 'And that'll be better than bringing her back with empty holds. A day more or less doesn't matter.'

"This was sound talk, and the Chinaman owner could not but agree. But if it hadn't been sound it would have been just the same. Davidson did what he liked. He was a man that could do no wrong. However, this suggestion of his was not merely a business matter. There was in it a touch of Davidsonian kindness. For you must know that the man could not have continued to live quietly up that creek if it had not been for Davidson's willingness to call there from time to time. And Davidson's Chinaman knew this perfectly well, too. So he only smiled his dignified bland smile, and said: 'All right, Captain. You do what you like.'

"I will explain presently how this connection between Davidson and that fellow came about. Now I want to tell you about the part of this affair which happened here—the preliminaries of it.

"You know as well as I do that these tiffin-rooms where we are sitting now have been in existence for many years. Well, next day about twelve o'clock, Davidson dropped in here to get something to eat.

"And here comes the only moment in this story where accident—mere accident—plays a part. If Davidson had gone home that day for tiffin, there would be now, after twelve years or more, nothing changed in his kindly, placid smile.

"But he came in here; and perhaps it was sitting at this very table that he remarked to a friend of mine that his next trip was going to be a dollar-collecting trip. He added, laughing, that his wife was making rather a fuss about it. She had begged him to stay ashore and get somebody else to take his place for a voyage. She thought

there was some danger on account of the dollars. He told her, he said, that there were no Java-sea pirates nowadays except in boys' books. He had laughed at her fears, but he was very sorry, too; for when she took any notion in her head it was impossible to argue her out of it. She would be worrying herself all the time he was away. Well, he couldn't help it. There was no one ashore fit to take his place for the trip.

"This friend of mine and I went home together in the same mail-boat, and he mentioned that conversation one evening in the Red Sea while we were talking over the things and people we had just left, with more or less regret.

"I can't say that Davidson occupied a very prominent place. Moral excellence seldom does. He was quietly appreciated by those who knew him well; but his more obvious distinction consisted in this, that he was married. Ours, as you remember, was a bachelor crowd; in spirit anyhow, if not absolutely in fact. There might have been a few wives in existence, but if so they were invisible, distant, never alluded to. For what would have been the good? Davidson alone was visibly married.

"Being married suited him exactly. It fitted him so well that the wildest of us did not resent the fact when it was disclosed. Directly he had felt his feet out here, Davidson sent for his wife. She came out (from West Australia) in the *Somerset,* under the care of Captain Ritchie—you know, Monkey-face Ritchie—who couldn't praise enough her sweetness, her gentleness, and her charm. She seemed to be the heaven-born mate for Davidson. She found on arrival a very pretty bungalow on the hill, ready for her and the little girl they had. Very soon he got for her a two-wheeled trap and a Burmah pony, and she used to drive down of an evening to pick up Davidson, on the quay. When Davidson, beaming, got into the trap, it would become very full all at once.

"We used to admire Mrs. Davidson from a distance. It was a girlish head out of a keepsake. From a distance. We had not many opportunities for a closer view, because she did not care to give them to us. We would have been glad to drop in at the

Davidson bungalow, but we were made to feel somehow that we were not very welcome there. Not that she ever said anything ungracious. She never had much to say for herself. I was perhaps the one who saw most of the Davidsons at home. What I noticed under the superficial aspect of vapid sweetness was her convex, obstinate forehead, and her small, red, pretty, ungenerous mouth. But then I am an observer with strong prejudices. Most of us were fetched by her white, swan-like neck, by that drooping, innocent profile. There was a lot of latent devotion to Davidson's wife hereabouts, at that time, I can tell you. But my idea was that she repaid it by a profound suspicion of the sort of men we were; a mistrust which extended—I fancied—to her very husband at times. And I thought then she was jealous of him in a way; though there were no women that she could be jealous about. She had no women's society. It's difficult for a shipmaster's wife unless there are other shipmasters' wives about, and there were none here then. I know that the dock manager's wife called on her; but that was all. The fellows here formed the opinion that Mrs. Davidson was a meek, shy little thing. She looked it, I must say. And this opinion was so universal that the friend I have been telling you of remembered his conversation with Davidson simply because of the statement about Davidson's wife. He even wondered to me: 'Fancy Mrs. Davidson making a fuss to that extent. She didn't seem to me the sort of woman that would know how to make a fuss about anything.'

"I wondered, too—but not so much. That bumpy forehead—eh? I had always suspected her of being silly. And I observed that Davidson must have been vexed by this display of wifely anxiety.

"My friend said: 'No. He seemed rather touched and distressed. There really was no one he could ask to relieve him; mainly because he intended to make a call in some God-forsaken creek, to look up a fellow of the name of Bamtz who apparently had settled there.'

"And again my friend wondered. 'Tell me,' he cried, 'what con-

nection can there be between Davidson and such a creature as Bamtz?'

"I don't remember now what answer I made. A sufficient one could have been given in two words: 'Davidson's goodness.' *That* never boggled at unworthiness if there was the slightest reason for compassion. I don't want you to think that Davidson had no discrimination at all. Bamtz could not have imposed on him. Moreover, everybody knew what Bamtz was. He was a loafer with a beard. When I think of Bamtz, the first thing I see is that long black beard and a lot of propitiatory wrinkles at the corners of two little eyes. There was no such beard from here to Polynesia, where a beard is a valuable property in itself. Bamtz's beard was valuable to him in another way. You know how impressed Orientals are by a fine beard. Years and years ago, I remember, the grave Abdullah, the great trader of Sambir, unable to repress signs of astonishment and admiration at the first sight of that imposing beard. And it's very well known that Bamtz lived on Abdullah off and on for several years. It was a unique beard, and so was the bearer of the same. A unique loafer. He made a fine art of it, or rather a sort of craft and mystery. One can understand a fellow living by cadging and small swindles in towns, in large communities of people; but Bamtz managed to do that trick in the wilderness, to loaf on the outskirts of the virgin forests.

"He understood how to ingratiate himself with the natives. He would arrive in some settlement up a river, make a present of a cheap carbine or a pair of shoddy binoculars, or something of that sort, to the Rajah, or the head-man, or the principal trader; and on the strength of that gift, ask for a house, posing mysteriously as a very special trader. He would spin them no end of yarns, live on the fat of the land for a while, and then do some mean swindle or other—or else they would get tired of him and ask him to quit. And he would go off meekly with an air of injured innocence. Funny life. Yet, he never got hurt somehow. I've heard of the Rajah of Dongala giving him fifty dollars' worth of

trade goods and paying his passage in a prau only to get rid of him. Fact. And observe that nothing prevented the old fellow having Bamtz's throat cut and the carcass thrown into deep water outside the reefs; for who on earth would have inquired after Bamtz?

"He had been known to loaf up and down the wilderness as far north as the Gulf of Tonkin. Neither did he disdain a spell of civilisation from time to time. And it was while loafing and cadging in Saïgon, bearded and dignified (he gave himself out there as a bookkeeper), that he came across Laughing Anne.

"The less said of her early history the better, but something must be said. We may safely suppose there was very little heart left in her famous laugh when Bamtz spoke first **to her** in some low café. She was stranded in Saïgon with precious little money and in great trouble about a kid she had, a boy of five or six.

"A fellow I just remember, whom they called Pearler Harry, brought her out first into these parts—from Australia, I believe. He brought her out and then dropped her, and she remained knocking about here and there, known to most of us by sight, at any rate. Everybody in the Archipelago had heard of Laughing Anne. She had really a pleasant silvery laugh always at her disposal, so to speak, but it wasn't enough apparently to make her fortune. The poor creature was ready to stick to any half-decent man if he would only let her, but she always got dropped, as might have been expected.

"She had been left in Saïgon by the skipper of a German ship with whom she had been going up and down the China coast as far as Vladivostok for near upon two years. . . . She had some notion that this would be her last chance. What frightened her most was the future of her child. She had left her boy in Saïgon before going off with the German, in the care of an elderly French couple. The husband was a doorkeeper in some Government office, but his time was up, and they were returning to France.

Prau: a light, swift Malay vessel.

She had to take the boy back from them; and after she had got him back, she did not like to part with him any more.

"That was the situation when she and Bamtz got acquainted casually. She could not have had any illusions about that fellow. To pick up with Bamtz was coming down pretty low in the world, even from a material point of view. She had always been decent, in her way; whereas Bamtz was, not to mince words, an abject sort of creature. On the other hand, that bearded loafer, who looked much more like a pirate than a bookkeeper, was not a brute. He was gentle—rather—even in his cups. And then, despair, like misfortune, makes us acquainted with strange bed-fellows. For she may well have despaired. She was no longer young—you know.

"On the man's side this conjunction is more difficult to explain, perhaps. One thing, however, must be said of Bamtz; he had always kept clear of native women. As one can't suspect him of moral delicacy, I surmise that it must have been from prudence. And he, too, was no longer young. There were many white hairs in his valuable black beard by then. He may have simply longed for some kind of companionship in his queer, degraded existence. Whatever their motives, they vanished from Saïgon together. And of course nobody cared what had become of them.

"Six months later Davidson came into the Mirrah Settlement. It was the very first time he had been up that creek, where no European vessel had ever been seen before. A Javanese passenger he had on board offered him fifty dollars to call in there—it must have been some very particular business—and Davidson consented to try. Fifty dollars, he told me, were neither here nor there; but he was curious to see the place, and the little *Sissie* could go anywhere where there was water enough to float a soup-plate.

"Davidson landed his Javanese plutocrat, and, as he had to wait a couple of hours for the tide, he went ashore himself to stretch his legs.

"It was a small settlement. Some sixty houses, most of them built on piles over the river, the rest scattered in the long grass; the usual pathway at the back; the forest hemming in the clearing and

smothering what there might have been of air into a dead, hot stagnation.

"All the population was on the river-bank staring silently, as Malays will do, at the *Sissie* anchored in the stream. She was almost as wonderful to them as an angel's visit. Many of the old people had only heard vaguely of fire-ships, and not many of the younger generation had seen one. On the back path Davidson strolled into perfect solitude. But he became aware of a bad smell and concluded he would go no farther.

"While he stood wiping his forehead, he heard from somewhere the exclamation: 'My God! It's Davy!'

"Davidson's lower jaw, as he expressed it, came unhooked at the crying of this excited voice. Davy was the name used by the associates of his young days; he hadn't heard it for many years. He stared about with his mouth open and saw a white woman issue from the long grass in which a small hut stood buried nearly up to the roof.

"Try to imagine the shock: in that wild place that you couldn't find on a map, and more squalid than the most poverty-stricken Malay settlement had a right to be, this European woman coming swishing out of the long grass in a fanciful tea-gown thing, dingy pink satin, with a long train and frayed lace trimmings; her eyes like black coals in a pasty-white face. Davidson thought that he was asleep, that he was delirious. From the offensive village mudhole (it was what Davidson had sniffed just before) a couple of filthy buffaloes uprose with loud snorts and lumbered off crashing through the bushes, panic-struck by this apparition.

"The woman came forward, her arms extended, and laid her hands on Davidson's shoulders, exclaiming: 'Why! You have hardly changed at all. The same good Davy.' And she laughed a little wildly.

"This sound was to Davidson like a galvanic shock to a corpse. He started in every muscle. 'Laughing Anne,' he said in an awe-struck voice.

"'All that's left of her, Davy. All that's left of her.'

"Davidson looked up at the sky; but there was to be seen no balloon from which she could have fallen on that spot. When he brought his distracted gaze down, it rested on a child holding on with a brown little paw to the pink satin gown. He had run out of the grass after her. Had Davidson seen a real hobgoblin his eyes could not have bulged more than at this small boy in a dirty white blouse and ragged knickers. He had a round head of tight chestnut curls, very sunburnt legs, a freckled face, and merry eyes. Admonished by his mother to greet the gentleman, he finished off Davidson by addressing him in French.

"'*Bonjour.*'

"Davidson, overcome, looked up at the woman in silence. She sent the child back to the hut, and when he had disappeared in the grass, she turned to Davidson, tried to speak, but after getting out the words, 'That's my Tony,' burst into a long fit of crying. She had to lean on Davidson's shoulder. He, distressed in the goodness of his heart, stood rooted to the spot where she had come upon him.

"What a meeting—eh? Bamtz had sent her out to see what white man it was who had landed. And she had recognized him from that time when Davidson, who had been pearling himself in his youth, had been associating with Harry the Pearler and others, the quietest of a rather rowdy set.

"Before Davidson retraced his steps to go on board the steamer, he had heard much of Laughing Anne's story, and had even had an interview, on the path, with Bamtz himself. She ran back to the hut to fetch him, and he came out lounging, with his hands in his pockets, with the detached, casual manner under which he concealed his propensity to cringe. Ya-a-as. He thought he would settle here permanently—with her. This with a nod at Laughing Anne, who stood by, a haggard, tragically anxious figure, her black hair hanging over her shoulders.

"'No more paint and dyes for me, Davy,' she struck in, 'if only

Bonjour: How do you do?

you will do what he wants you to do. You know that I was always ready to stand by my men—if they had only let me.'

"Davidson had no doubt of her earnestness. It was of Bamtz's good faith that he was not at all sure. Bamtz wanted Davidson to promise to call at Mirrah more or less regularly. He thought he saw an opening to do business with rattans there, if only he could depend on some craft to bring out trading goods and take away his produce.

"'I have a few dollars to make a start on. The people are all right.'

"He had come there, where he was not known, in a native prau, and had managed, with his sedate manner and the exactly right kind of yarn he knew how to tell to the natives, to ingratiate himself with the chief man. 'The Orang Kaya has given me that empty house there to live in as long as I will stay,' added Bamtz.

"'Do it, Davy,' cried the woman suddenly. 'Think of that poor kid.'

"'Seen him? 'Cute little customer,' said the reformed loafer in such a tone of interest as to surprise Davidson into a kindly glance.

"'I certainly can do it,' he declared. He thought of at first making some stipulation as to Bamtz behaving decently to the woman, but his exaggerated delicacy and also the conviction that such a fellow's promises were worth nothing, restrained him. Anne went a little distance down the path with him, talking anxiously.

"'It's for the kid. How could I have kept him with me if I had to knock about in towns? Here he will never know that his mother was a painted woman. And this Bamtz likes him. He's real fond of him. I suppose I ought to thank God for that.'

"Davidson shuddered at any human creature being brought so low as to have to thank God for the favours or affection of a Bamtz.

"'And do you think that you can make out to live here?' he asked gently.

"'Can't I? You know I have always stuck to men through thick and thin till they had enough of me. And now look at me! But

inside I am as I always was. I have acted on the square to them all one after another. Only they do get tired somehow. Oh, Davy! Harry ought not to have cast me off. It was he that led me astray.'

"Davidson mentioned to her that Harry the Pearler had been dead now for some years. Perhaps she had heard?

"She made a sign that she had heard; and walked by the side of Davidson in silence nearly to the bank. Then she told him that her meeting with him had brought back the old times to her mind. She had not cried for years. She was not a crying woman either. It was hearing herself called Laughing Anne that had started her sobbing like a fool. Harry was the only man she had loved. The others——

"She shrugged her shoulders. But she prided herself on her loyalty to the successive partners of her dismal adventures. She had never played any tricks in her life. She was a pal worth having. But men did get tired. They did not understand women. She supposed it had to be.

"Davidson was attempting a veiled warning as to Bamtz, but she interrupted him. She knew what men were. She knew what this man was like. But he had taken wonderfully to the kid. And Davidson desisted willingly, saying to himself that surely poor Laughing Anne could have no illusions by this time. She wrung his hand hard at parting.

"'It's for the kid, Davy—it's for the kid. Isn't he a bright little chap?'

II

"All this happened about two years before the day when Davidson, sitting in this very room, talked to my friend. You will see presently how this room can get full. Every seat'll be occupied, and as you notice, the tables are set close, so that the backs of the chairs are almost touching. There is also a good deal of noisy talk here about one o'clock.

"I don't suppose Davidson was talking very loudly; but very likely he had to raise his voice across the table to my friend. And here accident, mere accident, put in its work by providing a pair of fine ears close behind Davidson's chair. It was ten to one against the owner of the same having enough change in his pockets to get his tiffin here. But he had. Most likely had rooked somebody of a few dollars at cards overnight. He was a bright creature of the name of Fector, a spare, short, jumpy fellow with a red face and muddy eyes. He described himself as a journalist, as certain kinds of women give themselves out as actresses in the dock of a police-court.

"He used to introduce himself to strangers as a man with a mission to track out abuses and fight them whenever found. He would also hint that he was a martyr. And it's a fact that he had been kicked, horsewhipped, imprisoned, and hounded with ignominy out of pretty well every place between Ceylon and Shanghai, for a professional blackmailer.

"I suppose, in that trade, you've got to have active wits and sharp ears. It's not likely that he overheard every word Davidson said about his dollar-collecting trip, but he heard enough to set his wits at work.

"He let Davidson go out, and then hastened away down to the native slums to a sort of lodging-house kept in partnership by the usual sort of Portuguese and a very disreputable Chinaman. Macao Hotel, it was called, but it was mostly a gambling den that one used to warn fellows against. Perhaps you remember?

"There, the evening before, Fector had met a precious couple, a partnership even more queer than the Portuguese and the Chinaman. One of the two was Niclaus—you know. Why! the fellow with a Tartar moustache and a yellow complexion, like a Mongolian, only that his eyes were set straight and his face was not so flat. One couldn't tell what breed he was. A nondescript beggar. From a certain angle you would think a very bilious white man. And I daresay he was. He owned a Malay prau and called himself The Nakhoda, as one would say: The Captain. Aha! Now

you remember. He couldn't, apparently, speak any other European language than English, but he flew the Dutch flag on his prau.

"The other was the Frenchman without hands. Yes. The very same we used to know in Sydney, keeping a little tobacco shop at the lower end of George Street. You remember the huge carcass hunched up behind the counter, the big white face and the long black hair brushed back off a high forehead like a bard's. He was always trying to roll cigarettes on his knee with his stumps, telling endless yarns of Polynesia and whining and cursing in turn about *'mon malheur.'* His hands had been blown away by a dynamite cartridge while fishing in some lagoon. This accident, I believe, had made him more wicked than before, which is saying a good deal.

"He was always talking about 'resuming his activities,' some day, whatever they were, if he could only get an intelligent companion. It was evident that the little shop was no field for his activities, and the sickly woman with her face tied up, who used to look in sometimes through the back door, was no companion for him.

"And, true enough, he vanished from Sydney before long, after some trouble with the Excise fellows about his stock. Goods stolen out of a warehouse or something similar. He left the woman behind, but he must have secured some sort of companion—he could not have shifted for himself; but whom he went away with, and where, and what other companions he might have picked up afterwards, it is impossible to make the remotest guess about.

"Why exactly he came this way I can't tell. Towards the end of my time here we began to hear talk of a maimed Frenchman who had been seen here and there. But no one knew then that he had foregathered with Niclaus and lived in his prau. I daresay he put Niclaus up to a thing or two. Anyhow, it was a partnership. Niclaus was somewhat afraid of the Frenchman on account of his tempers, which were awful. He looked then like a devil; but a man without hands, unable to load or handle a weapon, can at

Mon malheur: my misfortune.

best go for one only with his teeth. From that danger Niclaus felt certain he could always defend himself.

"The couple were alone together loafing in the common-room of that infamous hotel when Fector turned up. After some beating about the bush, for he was doubtful how far he could trust those two, he repeated what he had overheard in the tiffin-rooms.

"His tale did not have much success till he came to mention the creek and Bamtz's name. Niclaus, sailing about like a native in a prau, was, in his own words, 'familiar with the locality.' The huge Frenchman, walking up and down the room with his stumps in the pockets of his jacket, stopped short in surprise. *'Comment? Bamtz! Bamtz!'*

"He had run across him several times in his life. He exclaimed: *'Bamtz! Mais je ne connais que ça!'* And he applied such a contemptuously indecent epithet to Bamtz that when, later, he alluded to him as *'une chiffe'* (a mere rag) it sounded quite complimentary. 'We can do with him what we like,' he asserted confidently. 'Oh, yes. Certainly we must hasten to pay a visit to that——' (another awful descriptive epithet quite unfit for repetition). 'Devil take me if we don't pull off a *coup* that will set us all up for a long time.'

"He saw all that lot of dollars melted into bars and disposed of somewhere on the China coast. Of the escape after the *coup* he never doubted. There was Niclaus's prau to manage that in.

"In his enthusiasm he pulled his stumps out of his pockets and waved them about. Then, catching sight of them, as it were, he held them in front of his eyes, cursing and blaspheming and bewailing his misfortune and his helplessness, till Niclaus quieted him down.

"But it was his mind that planned out the affair and it was his spirit which carried the other two on. Neither of them was of the

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Comment? What is that?
Mais je ne onnais que ça! Thats all I know!
Coup: stroke, trick.

bold buccaneer type; and Fector, especially, had never in his adventurous life used other weapons than slander and lies.

"That very evening they departed on a visit to Bamtz in Niclaus's prau, which had been lying, emptied of her cargo of cocoanuts, for a day or two under the canal bridge. They must have crossed the bows of the anchored *Sissie,* and no doubt looked at her with interest as the scene of their future exploit, the great haul, *le grand coup!*

"Davidson's wife, to his great surprise, sulked with him for several days before he left. I don't know whether it occurred to him that, for all her angelic profile, she was a very stupidly obstinate girl. She didn't like the tropics. He had brought her out there, where she had no friends, and now, she said, he was becoming inconsiderate. She had a presentiment of some misfortune, and notwithstanding Davidson's painstaking explanations, she could not see why her presentiments were to be disregarded. On the very last evening before Davidson went away she asked him in a suspicious manner:

"'Why is it that you are so anxious to go this time?'

"'I am not anxious,' protested the good Davidson. 'I simply can't help myself. There's no one else to go in my place.'

"'Oh! There's no one,' she said, turning away slowly.

"She was so distant with him that evening that Davidson from a sense of delicacy made up his mind to say good-bye to her at once and go and sleep on board. He felt very miserable and, strangely enough, more on his own account than on account of his wife. She seemed to him much more offended than grieved.

"Three weeks later, having collected a good many cases of old dollars (they were stowed aft in the lazarette with an iron bar and a padlock securing the hatch under his cabin-table), yes, with a bigger lot than he had expected to collect, he found himself homeward bound and off the entrance of the creek where Bamtz lived and even, in a sense, flourished.

"It was so late in the day, that Davidson actually hesitated

Le grand coup! the great stroke, the great success.

whether he should not pass by this time. He had no regard for Bamtz, who was a degraded but not a really unhappy man. His pity for Laughing Anne was no more than her case deserved. But his goodness was of a particularly delicate sort. He realized how these people were dependent on him, and how they would feel their dependence (if he failed to turn up) through a long month of anxious waiting. Prompted by his sensitive humanity, Davidson, in the gathering dusk, turned the *Sissie's* head towards the hardly discernible coast, and navigated her safely through a maze of shallow patches. But by the time he got to the mouth of the creek the night had come.

"The narrow waterway lay like a black cutting through the forest. And as there were always grounded snags in the channel which it would be impossible to make out, Davidson very prudently turned the *Sissie* round, and with only enough steam on the boilers to give her a touch ahead if necessary, let her drift up stern first with the tide, silent and invisible in the impenetrable darkness and in the dumb stillness.

"It was a long job, and when at the end of two hours Davidson thought he must be up to the clearing, the settlement slept already, the whole land of forests and rivers was asleep.

"Davidson, seeing a solitary light in the massed darkness of the shore, knew that it was burning in Bamtz's house. This was unexpected at this time of the night, but convenient as a guide. By a turn of the screw and a touch of the helm he sheered the *Sissie* alongside Bamtz's wharf—a miserable structure of a dozen piles and a few planks, of which the ex-vagabond was very proud. A couple of Kalashes jumped down on it, took a turn with the ropes thrown to them round the posts, and the *Sissie* came to rest without a single loud word or the slightest noise. And just in time too, for the tide turned even before she was properly moored.

"Davidson had something to eat, and then, coming on deck for a last look round, noticed that the light was still burning in the house.

"This was very unusual, but since they were awake so late,

Davidson thought that he would go up to say that he was in a hurry to be off and to ask that what rattans there were in store should be sent on board with the first sign of dawn.

"He stepped carefully over the shaky planks, not being anxious to get a sprained ankle, and picked his way across the waste ground to the foot of the house ladder. The house was but a glorified hut on piles, unfenced and lonely.

"Like many a stout man, Davidson is very light-footed. He climbed the seven steps or so, stepped across the bamboo platform quietly, but what he saw through the doorway stopped him short.

"Four men were sitting by the light of a solitary candle. There was a bottle, a jug and glasses on the table, but they were not engaged in drinking. Two packs of cards were lying there too, but they were not preparing to play. They were talking together in whispers, and remained quite unaware of him. He himself was too astonished to make a sound for some time. The world was still, except for the sibilation of the whispering heads bunched together over the table.

"And Davidson, as I have quoted him to you before, didn't like it. He didn't like it at all.

"The situation ended with a scream proceeding from the dark, interior part of the room. 'O Davy! you've given me a turn.'

"Davidson made out beyond the table Anne's very pale face. She laughed a little hysterically, out of the deep shadows between the gloomy mat walls. 'Ha! ha! ha!'

"The four heads sprang apart at the first sound, and four pairs of eyes became fixed stonily on Davidson. The woman came forward, having little more on her than a loose chintz wrapper and straw slippers on her bare feet. Her head was tied up Malay fashion in a red handkerchief, with a mass of loose hair hanging under it behind. Her professional, gay, European feathers had literally dropped off her in the course of these two years, but a long necklace of amber beads hung around her uncovered neck. It was the only ornament she had left; Bamtz had sold all her

poor-enough trinkets during the flight from Saïgon—when their association began.

"She came forward, past the table, into the light, with her usual groping gesture of extended arms, as though her soul, poor thing! had gone blind long ago, her white cheeks hollow, her eyes darkly wild, distracted, as Davidson thought. She came on swiftly, grabbed him by the arm, dragged him in. 'It's heaven itself that sends you to-night. My Tony's so bad—come and see him. Come along —do!'

"Davidson submitted. The only one of the men to move was Bamtz, who made as if to get up but dropped back in his chair again. Davidson in passing heard him mutter confusedly something that sounded like 'poor little beggar.'

"The child, lying very flushed in a miserable cot knocked up out of gin-cases, stared at Davidson with wide, drowsy eyes. It was a bad bout of fever clearly. But while Davidson was promising to go on board and fetch some medicines, and generally trying to say reassuring things, he could not help being struck by the extraordinary manner of the woman standing by his side. Gazing with despairing expression down at the cot, she would suddenly throw a quick, startled glance at Davidson and then towards the other room.

"'Yes, my poor girl,' he whispered, interpreting her distraction in his own way, though he had nothing precise in his mind. 'I'm afraid this bodes no good to you. How is it they are here?'

"She seized his forearm and breathed out forcibly: 'No good to me! Oh, no! But what about you! They are after the dollars you have on board.'

"Davidson let out an astonished 'How do they know there are any dollars?'

"She clapped her hands lightly, in distress. 'So it's true! You have them on board? Then look out for yourself.'

"They stood gazing down at the boy in the cot, aware that they might be observed from the other room.

"'We must get him to perspire as soon as possible,' said David-

son in his ordinary voice. 'You'll have to give him hot drink of some kind. I will go on board and bring you a spirit-kettle amongst other things.' And he added under his breath: 'Do they actually mean murder?'

"She made no sign, she had returned to her desolate contemplation of the boy. Davidson thought she had not heard him even, when with an unchanged expression she spoke under her breath.

"'The Frenchman would, in a minute. The others shirk it—unless you resist. He's a devil. He keeps them going. Without him they would have done nothing but talk. I've got chummy with him. What can you do when you are with a man like the fellow I am with now? Bamtz is terrified of them, and they know it. He's in it from funk. Oh, Davy! take your ship away—quick!'

"'Too late,' said Davidson. 'She's on the mud already.'

"'If the kid hadn't been in this state I would have run off with him—to you—into the woods—anywhere. Oh, Davy! will he die?' she cried aloud suddenly.

"Davidson met three men in the doorway. They made way for him without actually daring to face his glance. But Bamtz was the only one who looked down with an air of guilt. The big Frenchman had remained lolling in his chair; he kept his stumps in his pockets and addressed Davidson.

"'Isn't it unfortunate about that child! The distress of that woman there upsets me, but I am of no use in the world. I couldn't smooth the sick pillow of my dearest friend. I have no hands. Would you mind sticking one of those cigarettes there into the mouth of a poor, harmless cripple? My nerves want soothing—upon my honour, they do.'

"Davidson complied with his naturally kind smile. As his outward placidity becomes only more pronounced if possible, the more reason there is for excitement; and as Davidson's eyes, when his wits are hard at work, get very still and as if sleepy, the huge Frenchman might have been justified in concluding that the man there was a mere sheep—a sheep ready for slaughter. With a '*merci*

bien' he uplifted his huge carcass to reach the light of the candle with his cigarette, and Davidson left the house.

"Going down to the ship and returning, he had time to consider his position. At first he was inclined to believe that these men (Niclaus—the white Nakhoda—was the only one he knew by sight before, besides Bamtz) were not of the stamp to proceed to extremities. This was partly the reason why he never attempted to take any measures on board. His pacific Kalashes were not to be thought of as against white men. His wretched engineer would have had a fit from fright at the mere idea of any sort of combat. Davidson knew that he would have to depend on himself in this affair if it ever came off.

"Davidson underestimated naturally the driving power of the Frenchman's character and the force of the actuating motive. To that man so hopelessly crippled these dollars were an enormous opportunity. With his share of the robbery he would open another shop in Vladivostok, Haiphong, Manila—somewhere far away.

"Neither did it occur to Davidson, who is a man of courage, if ever there was one, that his psychology was not known to the world at large, and that to this particular lot of ruffians, who judged him by his appearance, he appeared an unsuspicious, inoffensive, soft creature, as he passed again through the room, his hands full of various objects and parcels destined for the sick boy.

"All the four were sitting again round the table. Bamtz not having the pluck to open his mouth, it was Niclaus who, as a collective voice, called out to him thickly to come out soon and join in a drink.

"'I think I'll have to stay some little time in there, to help her look after the boy,' Davidson answered without stopping.

"This was a good thing to say to allay a possible suspicion. And as it was, Davidson felt he must not stay very long.

"He sat down on an old empty nail-keg near the improvised cot and looked at the child; while Laughing Anne, moving to and fro, preparing the hot drink, giving it to the boy in spoonfuls, or stop-

Merci bien: many thanks.

ping to gaze motionless at the flushed face, whispered disjointed bits of information. She had succeeded in making friends with that French devil. Davy would understand that she knew how to make herself pleasant to a man.

"And Davidson nodded without looking at her.

"The big beast had got to be quite confidential with her. She held his cards for him when they were having a game. Bamtz! Oh! Bamtz in his funk was only too glad to see the Frenchman humoured. And the Frenchman had come to believe that she was a woman who didn't care what she did. That's how it came about they got to talk before her openly. For a long time she could not make out what game they were up to. The new arrivals, not expecting to find a woman with Bamtz, had been very startled and annoyed at first, she explained.

"She busied herself in attending to the boy; and nobody looking into that room would have seen anything suspicious in those two people exchanging murmurs by the sick-bedside.

"'But now they think I am a better man than Bamtz ever was,' she said with a faint laugh.

"The child moaned. She went down on her knees, and, bending low, contemplated him mournfully. Then raising her head, she asked Davidson whether he thought the child would get better. Davidson was sure of it. She murmured sadly: 'Poor kid. There's nothing in life for such as he. Not a dog's chance. But I couldn't let him go, Davy! I couldn't.'

"Davidson felt a profound pity for the child. She laid her hand on his knee and whispered an earnest warning against the Frenchman. Davy must never let him come to close quarters. Naturally Davidson wanted to know the reason, for a man without hands did not strike him as very formidable under any circumstances.

"'Mind you don't let him—that's all,' she insisted anxiously, hesitated, and then confessed that the Frenchman had got her away from the others that afternoon and had ordered her to tie a seven-pound iron weight (out of the set of weights Bamtz used in business) to his right stump. She had to do it for him. She had

been afraid of his savage temper. Bamtz was such a craven, and neither of the other men would have cared what happened to her. The Frenchman, however, with many awful threats had warned her not to let the others know what she had done for him. Afterwards he had been trying to cajole her. He had promised her that if she stood by him faithfully in this business he would take her with him to Haiphong or some other place. A poor cripple needed somebody to take care of him—always.

"Davidson asked her again if they really meant mischief. It was, he told me, the hardest thing to believe he had run against, as yet, in his life. Anne nodded. The Frenchman's heart was set on this robbery. Davy might expect them, about midnight, creeping on board his ship, to steal anyhow—to murder, perhaps. Her voice sounded weary, and her eyes remained fastened on her child.

"And still Davidson could not accept it somehow; his contempt for these men was too great.

"'Look here, Davy,' she said. 'I'll go outside with them when they start, and it will be hard luck if I don't find something to laugh at. They are used to that from me. Laugh or cry—what's the odds? You will be able to hear me on board on this quiet night. Dark it is too. Oh! it's dark, Davy!—it's dark!'

"'Don't you run any risks,' said Davidson. Presently he called her attention to the boy, who, less flushed now, had dropped into a sound sleep. 'Look. He'll be all right.'

"She made as if to snatch the child up to her breast, but restrained herself. Davidson prepared to go. She whispered hurriedly:

"'Mind, Davy! I've told them that you generally sleep aft in the hammock under the awning over the cabin. They have been asking me about your ways and about your ship, too. I told them all I knew. I had to keep in with them. And Bamtz would have told them if I hadn't—you understand?'

"He made a friendly sign and went out. The men about the table (except Bamtz) looked at him. This time it was Fector who spoke. 'Won't you join us in a quiet game, Captain?'

"Davidson said that now the child was better he thought he would go on board and turn in. Fector was the only one of the four whom he had, so to speak, never seen, for he had had a good look at the Frenchman already. He observed Fector's muddy eyes, his mean, bitter mouth. Davidson's contempt for these men rose in his gorge, while his placid smile, his gentle tones and general air of innocence put heart into them. They exchanged meaning glances.

"'We shall be sitting late over the cards,' Fector said in his harsh, low voice.

"'Don't make more noise than you can help.'

"'Oh! we are a quiet lot. And if the invalid shouldn't be so well, she will be sure to send one of us down to call you, so that you may play the doctor again. So don't shoot at sight.'

"'He isn't a shooting man,' struck in Niclaus.

"'I never shoot before making sure there's a reason for it—at any rate,' said Davidson.

"Bamtz let out a sickly snigger. The Frenchman alone got up to make a bow to Davidson's careless nod. His stumps were stuck immovably in his pockets. Davidson understood now the reason.

"He went down to the ship. His wits were working actively, and he was thoroughly angry. He smiled, he says (it must have been the first grim smile of his life), at the thought of the seven-pound weight lashed to the end of the Frenchman's stump. The ruffian had taken that precaution in case of a quarrel that might arise over the division of the spoil. A man with an unsuspected power to deal killing blows could take his own part in a sudden scrimmage round a heap of money, even against adversaries armed with revolvers, especially if he himself started the row.

"'He's ready to face any of his friends with that thing. But he will have no use for it. There will be no occasion to quarrel about these dollars here,' thought Davidson, getting on board quietly. He never paused to look if there was anybody about the decks. As a matter of fact, most of his crew were on shore, and the rest slept, stowed away in dark corners.

"He had his plan, and he went to work methodically.

"He fetched a lot of clothing from below and disposed it in his hammock in such a way as to distend it to the shape of a human body; then he threw over all the light cotton sheet he used to draw over himself when sleeping on deck. Having done this, he loaded his two revolvers and clambered into one of the boats the *Sissie* carried right aft, swung out on their davits. Then he waited.

"And again the doubt of such a thing happening to him crept into his mind. He was almost ashamed of this ridiculous vigil in a boat. He became bored. And then he became drowsy. The stillness of the black universe wearied him. There was not even the lapping of the water to keep him company, for the tide was out and the *Sissie* was lying on soft mud. Suddenly in the breathless, soundless, hot night an argus pheasant screamed in the woods across the stream. Davidson started violently, all his senses on the alert at once.

"The candle was still burning in the house. Everything was quiet again, but Davidson felt drowsy no longer. An uneasy premonition of evil oppressed him.

"'Surely I am not afraid,' he argued with himself.

"The silence was like a seal on his ears, and his nervous inward impatience grew intolerable. He commmanded himself to keep still. But all the same he was just going to jump out of the boat when a faint ripple on the immensity of silence, a mere tremor in the air, the ghost of a silvery laugh, reached his ears.

"Illusion!

"He kept very still. He had no difficulty now in emulating the stillness of the mouse—a grimly determined mouse. But he could not shake off that premonition of evil unrelated to the mere danger of the situation. Nothing happened. It had been an illusion!

"A curiosity came to him to learn how they would go to work. He wondered and wondered, till the whole thing seemed more absurd than ever.

"He had left the hanging lamp in the cabin burning as usual. It was part of his plan that everything should be as usual. Sud-

denly in the dim glow of the skylight panes a bulky shadow came up the ladder without a sound, made two steps toward the hammock (it hung right over the skylight), and stood motionless. The Frenchman!

"The minutes began to slip away. Davidson guessed that the Frenchman's part (the poor cripple) was to watch his (Davidson's) slumbers while the others were no doubt in the cabin busy forcing off the lazarette hatch.

"What was the course they meant to pursue once they got hold of the silver (there were ten cases, and each could be carried easily by two men) nobody can tell now. But so far, Davidson was right. They were in the cabin. He expected to hear the sounds of breaking-in every moment. But the fact was that one of them (perhaps Fector, who had stolen papers out of desks in his time) knew how to pick a lock, and apparently was provided with the tools. Thus while Davidson expected every moment to hear them begin down there, they had the bar off already and two cases actually up in the cabin out of the lazarette.

"In the diffused faint glow of the skylight the Frenchman moved no more than a statue. Davidson could have shot him with the greatest ease—but he was not homicidally inclined. Moreover, he wanted to make sure before opening fire that the others had gone to work. Not hearing the sounds he expected to hear, he felt uncertain whether they all were on board yet.

"While he listened, the Frenchman, whose immobility might have but cloaked an internal struggle, moved forward a pace, then another. Davidson, entranced, watched him advance one leg, withdraw his right stump, the armed one, out of his pocket, and swinging his body to put greater force into the blow, bring the seven-pound weight down on the hammock where the head of the sleeper ought to have been.

"Davidson admitted to me that his hair stirred at the roots then. But for Anne, his unsuspecting head would have been there. The Frenchman's surprise must have been simply overwhelming. He staggered away from the lightly swinging hammock, and before

Davidson could make a movement he had vanished, bounding down the ladder to warn and alarm the other fellows.

"Davidson sprang instantly out of the boat, threw up the skylight flap, and had a glimpse of the men down there crouching round the hatch. They looked up scared, and at that moment the Frenchman outside the door bellowed out *'Trahison—trahison!'* They bolted out of the cabin, falling over each other and swearing awfully. The shot Davidson let off down the skylight had hit no one; but he ran to the edge of the cabin-top and at once opened fire at the dark shapes rushing about the deck. These shots were returned, and a rapid fusillade burst out, reports and flashes, Davidson dodging behind a ventilator and pulling the trigger till his revolver clicked, and then throwing it down to take the other in his right hand.

"He had been hearing in the din the Frenchman's infuriated yells *'Tuez-le!—tuez-le!'* above the fierce cursing of the others. But though they fired at him they were only thinking of clearing out. In the flashes of the last shots Davidson saw them scrambling over the rail. That he had hit more than one he was certain. Two different voices had cried out in pain. But apparently none of them was disabled.

"Davidson leaned against the bulwark reloading his revolver without haste. He had not the slightest apprehension of their coming back. On the other hand, he had no intention of pursuing them on shore in the dark. What they were doing he had no idea. Looking to their hurts probably. Not very far from the bank the invisible Frenchman was blaspheming and cursing his associates, his luck, and all the world. He ceased; then with a sudden, vengeful yell, 'It's that woman!—it's that woman that has sold us,' was heard running off in the night.

"Davidson caught his breath in a sudden pang of remorse. He perceived with dismay that the stratagem of his defence had given Anne away. He did not hesitate a moment. It was for him to

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Trahison! Treachery!
Tuez-le! Kill him!

save her now. He leaped ashore. But even as he landed on the wharf he heard a shrill shriek which pierced his very soul.

"The light was still burning in the house. Davidson, revolver in hand, was making for it when another shriek, away to his left, made him change his direction.

"He changed his direction—but very soon he stopped. It was then that he hesitated in cruel perplexity. He guessed what had happened. The woman had managed to escape from the house in some way, and now was being chased in the open by the infuriated Frenchman. He trusted she would try to run on board for protection.

"All was still around Davidson. Whether she had run on board or not, this silence meant that the Frenchman had lost her in the dark.

"Davidson, relieved, but still very anxious, turned towards the river-side. He had not made two steps in that direction when another shriek burst out behind him, again close to the house.

"He thinks that the Frenchman had lost sight of the poor woman right enough. Then came that period of silence. But the horrible ruffian had not given up his murderous purpose. He reasoned that she would try to steal back to her child, and went to lie in wait for her near the house.

"It must have been something like that. As she entered the light falling about the house-ladder, he had rushed at her too soon, impatient for vengeance. She had let out that second scream of mortal fear when she caught sight of him, and turned to run for life again.

"This time she was making for the river, but not in a straight line. Her shrieks circled about Davidson. He turned on his heels, following the horrible trail of sound in the darkness. He wanted to shout, 'This way, Anne! I am here!' but he couldn't. At the horror of this chase, more ghastly in his imagination than if he could have seen it, the perspiration broke out on his forehead, while his throat was as dry as tinder. A last supreme scream was cut short suddenly.

"The silence which ensued was even more dreadful. Davidson felt sick. He tore his feet from the spot and walked straight before him, gripping the revolver and peering into the obscurity fearfully. Suddenly a bulky shape sprang from the ground within a few yards of him and bounded away. Instinctively he fired at it, started to run in pursuit, and stumbled against something soft which threw him down headlong.

"Even as he pitched forward on his head he knew it could be nothing else but Laughing Anne's body. He picked himself up and, remaining on his knees, tried to lift her in his arms. He felt her so limp that he gave it up. She was lying on her face, her long hair scattered on the ground. Some of it was wet. Davidson, feeling about her head, came to a place where the crushed bone gave way under his fingers. But even before that discovery he knew that she was dead. The pursuing Frenchman had flung her down with a kick from behind, and, squatting on her back, was battering in her skull with the weight she herself had fastened to his stump, when the totally unexpected Davidson loomed up in the night and scared him away.

"Davidson, kneeling by the side of that woman done so miserably to death, was overcome by remorse. She had died for him. His manhood was as if stunned. For the first time he felt afraid. He might have been pounced upon in the dark at any moment by the murderer of Laughing Anne. He confesses to the impulse of creeping away from that pitiful corpse on his hands and knees to the refuge of the ship. He even says that he actually began to do so. . . .

"One can hardly picture to oneself Davidson crawling away on all fours from the murdered woman—Davidson unmanned and crushed by the idea that she had died for him in a sense. But he could not have gone very far. What stopped him was the thought of the boy, Laughing Anne's child, that (Davidson remembered her very words) would not have a dog's chance.

"This life the woman had left behind her appeared to Davidson's conscience in the light of a sacred trust. He assumed an erect atti-

tude and, quaking inwardly still, turned about and walked towards the house.

"For all his tremors he was very determined; but that smashed skull had affected his imagination, and he felt very defenceless in the darkness in which he seemed to hear faintly now here, now there, the prowling footsteps of the murderer without hands. But he never faltered in his purpose. He got away with the boy safely after all. The house he found empty. A profound silence encompassed him all the time, except once, just as he got down the ladder with Tony in his arms, when a faint groan reached his ears. It seemed to come from the pitch-black space between the posts on which the house was built, but he did not stop to investigate.

"It's no use telling you in detail how Davidson got on board with the burden Anne's miserably cruel fate had thrust into his arms; how next morning his scared crew, after observing from a distance the state of affairs on board, rejoined with alacrity; how Davidson went ashore and, aided by his engineer (still half dead with fright), rolled up Laughing Anne's body in a cotton sheet and brought it on board for burial at sea later. While busy with this pious task, Davidson, glancing about, perceived a huge heap of white clothes huddled up against the corner-post of the house. That it was the Frenchman lying there he could not doubt. Taking it in connection with the dismal groan he had heard in the night, Davidson is pretty sure that his random shot gave a mortal hurt to the murderer of poor Anne.

"As to the others, Davidson never set eyes on a single one of them. Whether they had concealed themselves in the scared settlement, or bolted into the forest, or were hiding on board Niclaus's prau, which could be seen lying on the mud a hundred yards or so higher up the creek, the fact is that they vanished; and Davidson did not trouble his head about them. He lost no time in getting out of the creek directly the *Sissie* floated. After steaming some twenty miles clear of the coast, he (in his own words) 'committed the body to the deep.' He did everything himself. He weighted her down with a few fire-bars, he read the service, he lifted the

plank, he was the only mourner. And while he was rendering these last services to the dead, the desolation of that life and the atrocious wretchedness of its end cried aloud to his compassion, whispered to him in tones of self-reproach.

"He ought to have handled the warning she had given him in another way. He was convinced now that a simple display of watchfulness would have been enough to restrain that vile and cowardly crew. But the fact was that he had not quite believed that anything would be attempted.

"The body of Laughing Anne having been 'committed to the deep' some twenty miles S.S.W. from Cape Selatan, the task before Davidson was to commit Laughing Anne's child to the care of his wife. And there poor, good Davidson made a fatal move. He didn't want to tell her the whole awful story, since it involved the knowledge of the danger from which he, Davidson, had escaped. And this, too, after he had been laughing at her unreasonable fears only a short time before.

" 'I thought that if I told her everything,' Davidson explained to me, 'she would never have a moment's peace while I was away on my trips.'

"He simply stated that the boy was an orphan, the child of some people to whom he, Davidson, was under the greatest obligation, and that he felt morally bound to look after him. Some day he would tell her more, he said, and meantime he trusted in the goodness and warmth of her heart, in her woman's natural compassion.

"He did not know that her heart was about the size of a parched pea, and had the proportional amount of warmth; and that her faculty of compassion was mainly directed to herself. He was only startled and disappointed at the air of cold surprise and the suspicious look with which she received his imperfect tale. But she did not say much. She never had much to say. She was a fool of the silent, hopeless kind.

"What story Davidson's crew thought fit to set afloat in Malay town is neither here nor there. Davidson himself took some of his

friends into his confidence, besides giving the full story officially to the Harbour Master.

"The Harbour Master was considerably astonished. He didn't think, however, that a formal complaint should be made to the Dutch Government. They would probably do nothing in the end, after a lot of trouble and correspondence. The robbery had not come off, after all. Those vagabonds could be trusted to go to the devil in their own way. No amount of fuss would bring the poor woman to life again, and the actual murderer had been done justice to by a chance shot from Davidson. Better let the matter drop.

"This was good common sense. But he was impressed.

" 'Sounds a terrible affair, Captain Davidson.'

" 'Aye, terrible enough,' agreed the remorseful Davidson. But the most terrible thing for him, though he didn't know it then, was that his wife's silly brain was slowly coming to the conclusion that Tony was Davidson's child, and that he had invented that lame story to introduce him into her pure home in defiance of decency, of virtue—of her most sacred feelings.

"Davidson was aware of some constraint in his domestic relations. But at the best of times she was not demonstrative; and perhaps that very coldness was part of her charm in the placid Davidson's eyes. Women are loved for all sorts of reasons and even for characteristics which one would think repellent. She was watching him and nursing her suspicions.

"Then, one day, Monkey-face Ritchie called on that sweet, shy Mrs. Davidson. She had come out under his care, and he considered himself a privileged person—her oldest friend in the tropics. He posed for a great admirer of hers. He was always a great chatterer. He had got hold of the story rather vaguely, and he started chattering on that subject, thinking she knew all about it. And in due course he let out something about Laughing Anne.

" 'Laughing Anne,' says Mrs. Davidson with a start. 'What's that?'

"Ritchie plunged into circumlocution at once, but she very soon stopped him. 'Is that creature dead?' she asks.

"'I believe so,' stammered Ritchie. 'Your husband says so.'

"'But you don't know for certain?'

"'No! How could I, Mrs. Davidson!'

"'That's all I wanted to know,' says she, and goes out of the room.

"When Davidson came home she was ready to go for him, not with common voluble indignation, but as if trickling a stream of cold clear water down his back. She talked of his base intrigue with a vile woman, of being made a fool of, of the insult to her dignity.

"Davidson begged her to listen to him and told her all the story, thinking that it would move a heart of stone. He tried to make her understand his remorse. She heard him to the end, said 'Indeed!' and turned her back on him.

"'Don't you believe me?' he asked, appalled.

"She didn't say yes or no. All she said was, 'Send that brat away at once.'

"'I can't throw him out into the street,' cried Davidson. 'You don't mean it.'

"'I don't care. There are charitable institutions for such children, I suppose.'

"'That I will never do,' said Davidson.

"'Very well. That's enough for me.'

"Davidson's home after this was like a silent, frozen hell for him. A stupid woman with a sense of grievance is worse than an unchained devil. He sent the boy to the White Fathers in Malacca. This was not a very expensive sort of education, but she could not forgive him for not casting the offensive child away utterly. She worked up her sense of her wifely wrongs and of her injured purity to such a pitch that one day, when poor Davidson was pleading with her to be reasonable and not to make an impossible existence for them both, she turned on him in a chill passion and told him that his very sight was odious to her.

"Davidson, with his scrupulous delicacy of feeling, was not the man to assert his rights over a woman who could not bear the

sight of him. He bowed his head; and shortly afterwards arranged for her to go back to her parents. That was exactly what she wanted in her outraged dignity. And then she had always disliked the tropics and had detested secretly the people she had to live amongst as Davidson's wife. She took her pure, sensitive, mean little soul away to Fremantle or somewhere in that direction. And of course the little girl went away with her too. What could poor Davidson have done with a little girl on his hands, even if she had consented to leave her with him—which is unthinkable?

"This is the story that has spoiled Davidson's smile for him—which perhaps it wouldn't have done so thoroughly had he been less of a good fellow."

Hollis ceased. But before we rose from the table I asked him if he knew what had become of Laughing Anne's boy.

He counted carefully the change handed him by the Chinaman waiter, and raised his head.

"Oh! that's the finishing touch. He was a bright, taking little chap, as you know, and the Fathers took very special pains in his bringing up. Davidson expected in his heart to have some comfort out of him. In his placid way he's a man who needs affection. Well, Tony has grown into a fine youth—but there you are! He wants to be a priest; his one dream is to be a missionary. The Fathers assure Davidson that it is a serious vocation. They tell him he has a special disposition for mission work, too. So Laughing Anne's boy will lead a saintly life in China somewhere; he may even become a martyr; but poor Davidson is left out in the cold. He will have to go downhill without a single human affection near him because of those old dollars."

Part Two

STUDYING THE STORIES

QUALITIES AND FEATURES OF THE SHORT STORY

TO APPRECIATE a good short story we must be able to recognize its effectiveness. If all we can say about it is that we like it or that it holds our interest, we are not judging it more intelligently than a child could do. A good short story tells something worth telling and tells it according to certain principles that are fundamental to effective story telling. Such a story is a work of art because in it an idea susceptible of artistic treatment is given artistic form.

A study of first class short stories will show us what qualities and features make short stories effective. After such a study we shall be able to enjoy good short stories more fully than we could before, because we shall be able to recognize values that we did not before consider.

Our discussion of what to look for in a short story will be divided into three sections. The first will deal with what we may call *short story elements,* the second with the matter of *unity,* and the third with *special features of construction.*

The student is not to think that when he judges a short story he should attempt to consider every point that will be made in the three sections. He should read the entire discussion carefully to get an idea of what makes a story effective. With this as a foundation he will be prepared to make the special study provided for each story in the collection; in the course of his work with the stories he should refer, as often as may be helpful, to the three sections of the discussion.

I. SHORT STORY ELEMENTS

Theme, Plot, Characterization, Setting, Emotional Effect, Classification according to Predominant Element

Theme

The short story writer starts out with an idea that he believes he can work up into a story. This story germ, which he is to develop to full

story form, is his *basic idea* or *theme* or *story substance*. It grows into a definite story when it is expressed in characters, incidents, dialogue, and setting. The theme may be some problem or struggle. It may be the reaction of interesting individuals to situations in which the author imagines them placed. It may be a close-up of life in some picturesque community or some little known part of the world. It may be an illustration of some fundamental truth or principle of life. When the reader tells in a single sentence "what the story is about," he is giving the basic idea or theme of that particular story. He is then reversing the author's procedure, for he is condensing the story to its bare substance, whereas the author started out with that and developed it into a story.

The theme must be sufficiently novel or ingenious or dramatic or emotionally moving to permit its being worked up into a story that will hold our interest. If we find ourselves saying of a story after we have read it, "It is clever, but there is nothing to it except the clever writing," we are really deciding that the substance of the story is too slight. Many short stories are ineffective because the theme is not worth while. Humorous stories, for example, are not likely to be great stories for the reason that in most of them the basic idea is nothing more than mere farcical action or ridiculous situation or humorous characterization. On the other hand, we can all mention stories that we read a long time ago but which we remember because of some power or truth or beauty in the basic idea. Perhaps some of the stories influenced our outlook upon an important phase of life. In such stories the fundamental substance was rich story material and worth whatever artistry the author could expend upon its development.

Ordinarily we do not trouble to look for the theme that underlies a finished story. It is the action, the characters, and the setting that impress us and that we remember. But we are likely to recognize and remember the theme for itself whenever it is some fundamental truth or principle of life that has never before been strikingly brought to our notice. It is a fact that every story which is true to life must necessarily deal with underlying human traits and attributes, and with conditions of life; but when the story presents vividly some such fundamental truth, we are certain to note the theme and to regard it as likely to prove memorable.

We must not confuse *theme* with *moral*. Nowadays few stories present a moral as such. We may see in any story that we read some

lesson or some guide to our own conduct, but modern authors do not set out to write edifying stories with moral tags attached to them.

In testing the theme of a story, we must ask ourselves these questions:

1. *What is the theme?*
2. *Is the theme sufficiently novel or ingenious or dramatic or emotionally moving to serve as the substance of an effective story?*
3. *Does the story so strikingly present some fundamental truth or principle of life as to justify our saying that the story will prove memorable for its theme?*

Plot

If the basic idea is to grow into a story, it must be expressed concretely in incident, characters, dialogue, and setting. Obviously, there must be an adequate pattern or design according to which these story elements are selected and arranged, if the substance of the story is to be given effective shape and form. This pattern or design is the *plot.*

The nature of the plot, or story design, will depend upon the nature of the basic idea. In a story where we are chiefly interested in either the setting or the characters, the plot need not be at all elaborate or intricate, because what matters most is either the background or the people in the story. In such a case the plot may be very simple indeed; perhaps a single incident will suffice to display the setting or provide the situation that tests the hearts and minds of the characters in whom our interest centers.

Where our concern is chiefly with the incidents, the plot must be planned to provide suspense, rapidity of action, and perhaps a surprise at the end. In a mystery story or a story of dramatic action, the plot must be a perfectly contrived mosaic where each bit of incident and dialogue fits exactly into the design of the problem and its solution. Miss Hinch has such a plot. Each time we read the story over, some new exactness of pattern becomes apparent. Stories like Gold-Mounted Guns and Blue Murder, too, would lose much of their effectiveness if the authors had not worked out the patterns of their plots with consummate skill. In Basquerie, on the other hand, the plot is simple because we are more concerned with the girl's reactions to the situations that arise than we are with the relation of the incidents to one another.

The plot should present a definite *climax* or point at which the main

objective of the story is reached. If the climax is well managed, the reader's interest will steadily increase until the climax is reached; but since the interest will be comparatively slight thereafter, the story should not extend much beyond it. The larger the element of suspense in a story, the stronger the climax should be, and the greater the need for ending the story when the climax has been reached.

Probability is a quality that a plot must have if we are to consider it a good one. Plots may sin against probability in several ways. For one thing, the incidents and situations may seem to exceed any likelihood of being paralleled in real life. If we read that a detective solves a murder mystery by the use of a camera so contrived that a photograph of the dead man's eyes will show what he saw just before he was killed, we realize that the author has violated probability. Many heroes of fiction endure exposure and fatigue that would kill any man we ever met in real life. Another way in which probability is often violated is by the straining of coincidence. The fact that a certain coincidence might just possibly occur in actual experience will not make it convincing in a story; as readers, we want coincidences explained. Perhaps the chief source of improbability in plot lies in this lack of causal relation between the incidents that take place. We have a right to expect that the succession of incidents be made likely, not only in themselves, but because they result from other incidents, or because the characters in the story would be likely to act as they do.

If there is a surprise at the end of a story, the narrative must do one of two things: either it must seem to point to a certain climax and then turn suddenly aside at the last moment and reach another climax that the reader did not expect; or it must seem not to be nearing any climax and suddenly develop one that, again, is unforeseen. In any case, the unexpected ending must be one that the reader will admit to be a reasonable one. If in looking back over the story we decide that the author did not prepare properly for the ending that he provides, we shall be justified in saying that he has sacrificed probability of plot for unjustified surprise.

The following questions constitute a test of plot:

1. *Is the plot convincing? That is, do we accept as probable the incidents and their relation to one another?*
2. *If our interest in the story is largely in what happens, does the plot seem sufficiently novel or marked by suspense to make it notable?*

3. *If the story presents a puzzle or problem, are we kept from guessing it until the end? Is the solution justified by what was told us in the story?*
4. *Is the climax as dramatic as the story seems to require?*
5. *Is there a surprise at the end of the story? If so, is the surprise legitimate? That is, does the author properly prepare for it, although keeping the reader from noting the preparation?*

Characterization

In actual life there are three ways for us to learn what sort of men and women any particular individuals are. We may read about them; other people may tell us about them; or we may meet them and judge them from their actions and speech and appearance. An author may portray his characters in virtually these same three ways. He may tell us what his men and women look like and what their qualities are; he may have some character in the story give us the information; he may refrain from any explanation of their natures and leave us to judge from what they do and say. Of course, in the last case he must tell us what his men and women look like if he wishes us to see them as he does. Obviously, the third of the three ways is the surest way to learn about people either in real life or in a story, but neither in actual experience nor in fiction is it always the most practical. This matter of how the author portrays his characters is something for us to consider when we judge a story, and we should at the same time consider whether his method is the best one for his particular story.

More important than the way in which the characters are portrayed is the question of whether they are clearly individualized. We must judge whether the characters appear to be distinct individuals—not merely distinct as to their costumes and their faces, but distinct in point of personality. The characters in ENGLAND TO AMERICA are successfully individualized, for each has a separate and definite personality. Miss Montague's method of portrayal is the third: at no time does she definitely tell us what kind of person any one of her characters is; we judge the three *Sherwoods* and *Sybil Gaylord* by what they do and say, and our clear-cut impression of them results wholly from our seeing and hearing them. *Cary* himself we judge entirely from his own thoughts and actions and speech. The author has so skilfully selected her incidents and her dialogue that every character in the story is absolutely distinct. They are so distinct, indeed, that a reader may well doubt

the fact, when it is first brought to his attention, that he has been given almost no details of the appearance of any of them. Certainly there is no word whatever as to what any character's dress is or what any character's features are. When character drawing as effective as Miss Montague's in this story is obtained with such a minimum of direct information, it is skilful indeed.

Beside the matter of how the characterization is made and how distinct the personalities are, there is the question of whether the characters are convincing. We must consider whether they seem like real men and women. If they are supermen or superwomen, or if they act without what seems adequate motive, we shall not be convinced of their reality. When we finish reading ENGLAND TO AMERICA, we are sure that the people whom *Skipworth Cary* met are English and that they are flesh and blood. As for *Cary,* we ourselves seem almost to have been the young American for the duration of the story. Every one of the five characters is some one we might meet tomorrow, and everything that any one of them does or says is just what we should expect him to do or say under the circumstances.

Characterization includes the matter of how the people in the story talk. The degree of education and breeding that any man or woman shows in other ways in the story, must appear in his or her speech. More than this, a character's speech must indicate the quality of his ideas and feelings. A commonplace man may not be made to speak poetically, nor a sensitive and imaginative woman made to voice empty platitudes, unless the circumstances warrant a marked deviation from habitual expression. If there is to be truth to life, a certain amount of uncouth and even profane speech may mark the utterance of an ignorant and violent character such as *Cam* in BLUE MURDER. But if truth to life calls for a large amount of language that is offensive, we shall feel that the author showed bad taste in writing the particular story that he did.

Dialect calls for close scrutiny. It must seem to us authentically represented if we are to accept the story as truthful. Certain dialects will be unfamiliar to us, such as the Norfolk speech of *Sam Gates* in A SOURCE OF IRRITATION; in such cases apparent accuracy is all we can ask, but the likelihood that the author is writing from adequate knowledge will give us confidence that the dialect is correctly indicated. The

presence of dialect will either increase or lessen our pleasure in any given story. So far it adds picturesqueness or novelty, we shall welcome it. But if there is too much dialect, or if it is difficult for us to understand, the case is otherwise.

The points to consider in a test of the characterization in any story are the following:

1. *How are the characters portrayed? Is this the best way to present them in this particular story?*
2. *Do the various men and women in the story seem to have clear-cut and distinct personalities?*
3. *Are the characters true to life in what they do and say?*
4. *If there is dialect, does it add to our enjoyment of the story? Does it seem to be accurately represented?*

Setting

By the *setting* of a story we mean its background—what would be the scenery if the story were a play given on a fully equipped stage.

In real life we learn from our senses what our surroundings are. For the most part our sense impressions are sight impressions, but hearing, smell, and touch often contribute a good deal. In a story these sense impressions must be given in words,—the words of the author himself or of one of the characters. This is description. At best description gives us sense pictures that are much less clear than those provided by our actual senses, and description is necessarily slow, as well. For example, we can actually see at a single glance what it would take minutes to describe even imperfectly. Perhaps an odor cannot be described at all. Obviously, since his space is limited, the short story writer must strictly limit his description, and he can best do this by giving us only the most important details of the scenes he wishes to show us. If he is skilful, he can create vivid sense pictures by portraying carefully selected details in a few vigorous words. His best descriptions will include sound, touch, and odor details as well as those of sight.

The amount of description in a story must be proportioned to two things: the importance of the setting and the length of the story. After all, a story must be first and foremost a story. Even where our interest is principally in the setting, something must happen of sufficient importance to "carry" the description of the background; if the latter bulks

disproportionately large, the story ceases to be properly a story. The three shortest stories in the collection illustrate how description must be limited in a brief story. The stories are THE WHIRLIGIG OF LIFE, GOLD-MOUNTED GUNS, and THE MONKEY'S PAW. There is slightly more description of setting in GOLD-MOUNTED GUNS than in the other two, but the description is very limited. Part of the first paragraph and a sentence here and there throughout the narrative is all. In none of the three stories is the setting at all important.

The setting is important if the interest in the story is centered to a considerable extent in novel or picturesque features of the background, if the reader's understanding of the action depends upon his knowledge of the background, or if the setting contributes to the emotional impression that the story as a whole makes upon the reader. There is a considerable amount of description in THE KITCHEN GODS, for there the setting is important both because it helps to create the emotional effect of the story and because the background is highly colorful and unusual. In LEGEND, a much longer story than GOLD MOUNTED GUNS, there is no description of setting whatever. The author has a special purpose in keeping the background vague, but the story illustrates the fact that where the setting is unimportant it should be pictured briefly, or even, in extreme cases, not at all.

Points to consider in judging the setting of a short story are:

1. *To what extent, and in what way, is the setting important?*
2. *Is the amount of description proportionate to the importance of the setting and to the length of the story?*
3. *Do the descriptive details appear to be wisely chosen? Are they effectively presented in few words? Are senses other than sight appealed to in the descriptions?*

Emotional Effect

We cannot have even the simplest actual experience without feeling in some way about it, although the feeling will be very faint if the experience is of slight importance. Fiction deals with imaginary experiences that might well be paralleled in life, and every short story should accordingly move a reader in the same way that the same experience would move him in actual life, though probably to a less degree. Suspense, fear, humor, and pathos most commonly mark the *emotional effect* of short stories, but the more subtle feelings are also played upon

by skilful writers. The Whirligig of Life sounds the double note of humor and pathos, and these two emotions are often inseparably mingled in life itself.

Clearly the best short stories will move us most. But we must make sure that the emotional effect which we feel in reading any story is legitimately aroused. We must be on our guard against mere sentimentality, for example. False sentiment is facetiously known as *hokum,* and its presence, especially in love stories, is the chief cause of the bad art that marks so many movies. Humor, too, is often obtained at the expense of probability, and the humorous story, like the love story, must be carefully examined for evidences of exaggeration.

When we judge the emotional effect of a story, we must consider three points:

1. *What emotional effect does the story create?*
2. *Is it as strong as the nature of the story warrants?*
3. *Is the effect fairly and properly produced, or does it depend upon a distortion of truth?*

Types of the Short Story

We have considered theme value, plot, characterization, setting, and emotional effect. We may classify any story, according to which of these five elements is most important in it, as *a story of theme, a story of plot, a character story, a story of local color,* or *a story of effect.*

In a story of theme, the basic idea is some truth or principle of life, that is convincingly presented. In a story of this type, not only will the theme be the idea from which the story is developed, but its presentation will be the purpose of the story.

Stories of plot form the largest of the five groups. Stories of this type are often divided into *problem or mystery stories, stories of dramatic incident, stories of adventure,* and *love stories.*

Character stories that are principally concerned with the portrayal of a person's mental and emotional state, are known as *psychological stories.*

A story of local color is a story of setting. The term "local color" may require a word of explanation. A story in which the setting is the most important element is sure to be one where physical background and manners and customs are novel and picturesque. Anything that is novel or picturesque is said to be "colorful," or to have "color"; and

because the setting in any story will concern some definite locality, the term "local color" is an appropriate one.

In a story of effect, the writer seeks first and foremost to make his readers feel in a certain way as they read his story. He shapes his plot, creates his characters, and chooses his setting with a view to the contribution that each can make to the emotional effect. Stories of the supernatural are usually stories of effect, and most humorous stories come under the heading.

We may sometimes find that two of the story elements are so important in a particular story that we cannot classify it under one head. In such a case we must give a double classification. Some stories may even require a triple classification.

II. UNITY

Of Action, of Time, of Place, of Emotional Effect

A good short story must be highly unified. We have seen that it must present one main problem or struggle, or one striking character situation, or a view of life in some one picturesque locality, or some one underlying truth of life. We have now to see that a short story should be pitched in one emotional key, that at every stage the action must contribute to the development of the basic idea, and that there may not be such changes in locality nor such lapses of time as would alter this development.

Unity of Action

The amount and intensity of the action will vary greatly in different stories, but whatever action there is must definitely contribute toward the full attainment of the story's objective.

This contribution may be indirect rather than direct. An incident from THE TRAWLER will illustrate this. In the story the author seeks to show the heroism of *Hugh Glynn* against the background of his environment. The story opens with *Saul Haverick* reporting *Arthur Snow's* death to *Arthur's* family. Then *Hugh Glynn* makes his report of the same thing to the same people in the same place. The first scene does not of itself show *Hugh's* character; but it belongs in the story because, aside from making *Saul's* later treachery seem reason-

able, it serves definitely to provide a contrast in which *Hugh's* simple manliness stands out in strong relief while he tells of *Arthur's* death.

There can be no definite limit to the number of incidents in a short story; but the number cannot be great because other unities will be violated if the incidents are many.

The test of unity of action is this:

Is there any incident which could be omitted without breaking the trend of the story or weakening the attainment of its main objective?

Unity of Time

As there is no specific limit to the number of incidents in a short story, so there is no definite limit of hours or days beyond which a story may not extend. But there is a real question of *time unity,* nevertheless. Often a story presents a lapse of time. This is permissible if the reader is not made to feel that there is a break in the story, and if during the time that passes there is no change in the main problem of the story or in the relation of the characters to one another. To make the latter condition is to say that lapse of time must not be employed in bringing about a development that should be provided by the incidents and dialogue. The Penalties of Artemis illustrates the proper use of time lapses. There is no break in the story, and the six weeks that pass on the coral island see the continuation of one situation: the two castaways must endure their isolation for a time long enough to make their experience a harrowing one, but there is no change in their relationship during the entire six weeks' interval.

The test for time unity summarizes the points just made:

Does any lapse of time cause a noticeable break in the development of the story? Does it affect either the unity of action or the relation of the characters to one another?

Unity of Place

The action of a short story need not take place in any one spot nor even in any one general locality. But where there is any considerable change in place, it must be one that makes possible a further or more rapid development of the story than would be possible without the change. A Source of Irritation presents shifts in locality that are necessary: there would be no story if old *Sam Gates* were not present

for a few wild hours at the seat of war; furthermore, he must return if the story is to have an effective ending.

If in any story there were many changes of place, the reader would get the impression that the chain of incidents was being dragged from place to place, and he would be conscious of an unpleasant lack of place unity even though the story moved forward at each change.

These two points constitute the test for place unity:

Are the changes in locality necessary for the effective development of the story, and are they few enough to avoid giving the reader an unpleasant sense of too much change?

Unity of Effect

If a short story is to be successful, it must present a unity of feeling. That is, it must make the reader feel in some one particular way throughout the story. There must be no jarring emotional note.

This does not mean that there may not be such a mingling of humor and pathos as there is in THE WHIRLIGIG OF LIFE, for humor and pathos are not discordant. Neither does it mean that there may not be carefully planned contrasts. But there must be no discord, and the story must not emotionally deceive the reader. If it is to end tragically, for example, it must either begin in such a way as to prepare the reader at once for the tragic climax that is to come, or else it must begin on a neutral note and work up to the tragic quality. If it is the author's purpose to make the reader feel very strongly, as in a story of effect, he must manage to have action, characters, dialogue, and setting all contribute, however slightly, to the unified emotional impression.

In testing a story for unity of effect, we should ask two questions:

1. *Do we entertain a single emotional state while reading the story?*
2. *If there is a contrast or mingling of effect, is the impression as a whole a unified one?*

III. SPECIAL FEATURES OF CONSTRUCTION

Exposition, Beginning, Ending, Point of View, Style

Exposition

A short story is a small piece or segment of the life of its characters, viewed by itself away from what has gone before and what comes after.

To read what happens in the story without being given an explanation of who the people are and how they came to be in the relationships in which the reader finds them, would be like beginning a continued story with some instalment later than the first. A magazine that runs a continued story will print a "synopsis of previous chapters" so that a reader who begins it late will know what is what and who is who and where the action takes place. The short story writer must give this same information, but he may not give a *synopsis of antecedent circumstances* as such; he must present his explanations less obtrusively than that. His presentation constitutes the *exposition* of his story. It must not be disproportionately long.

The exposition may take either of two forms. It may be a frank statement of facts by the author or by one of the characters who tells the story; or the story may begin without an exposition as such but present the necessary information in the speech and action of the characters. The first type of exposition is in effect a synopsis of antecedent circumstances, though it is not ostensibly such. The second of the two types is by far the more effective, but it requires a good deal of skill to weave the expository matter into the warp and woof of the story. It is the type that will be found in nearly all of the stories in this collection.

The tests for the exposition are these:

1. *What type of exposition is employed in the story?*
2. *Is the exposition unduly long?*
3. *If the exposition is embodied in the speech and action of the characters, has the author been successful in his attempt to present it unobtrusively?*

The Beginning

The beginning and the ending of a short story are highly important and distinctive parts, and if the student has ever tried to write a story or a play he will realize that they are the most difficult parts to shape effectively.

The beginning is difficult because the author has his exposition to get out of the way early, because he may wish to present at the start some description of his setting, and because he knows that the reader wants to be given the action and dialogue as soon as he can get it.

We shall find that in some stories the exposition—the *who* and *what*

and *where*—will come first, then a description of the setting, and last of all the start of the action and dialogue. In other cases the order of the first two items will be reversed. Sometimes there is no description of setting at the start. Usually the action or the dialogue will come first in the story, and the author will weave in with this his exposition and whatever description he may choose to present early in the story. Since action is always more interesting than explanation, we can regard this sort of beginning as likely to be in most cases the best.

The points just made may be summarized in question form:

1. *How has the author managed the start of his action and dialogue with reference to his exposition and whatever description there is of the setting?*
2. *Does his arrangement seem the best for this particular story?*

The Ending

The ending should be the ending not merely because the story stops there, but because it is the point at which the story must stop or trail off weakly in an anti-climax. The most striking ending is that which occurs as soon as the objective has been reached toward which the story has been moving. This objective will be the climax of the story, and if the story stops there, the ending will have a more dramatic quality than it could have if it came later. BLUE MURDER is one of several stories in the collection that illustrate the full climactic ending; it is not until the last sentence that the reader is sure of the solution to the problem which Mr. Steele's story has presented.

Sometimes the author may wish to explain either how certain characters react to the climax, or what consequences follow from it. If he prolongs the story to do this, he runs the risk of weakening his ending, and it becomes a question of whether or not the advantages will outweigh the disadvantages. In most cases the reader may safely be left to guess the results of the climax, for in the great majority of well-written stories these results will be inevitable, and it is best not to tell what is obvious.

Some stories take a sudden turn just at the end. This is the *surprise ending* made famous by O. Henry. Several of the stories in the collection end with a surprise. Of course, though the reader did not expect it, he must realize that the surprise ending is at least as logical and

reasonable as any other that might have been used; if it does not seem so to him, the writer has sacrificed unity of action in his desire for surprise.

In judging the ending, we should consider the following points:

1. *Does the story end with the climax, or does it end later? Would the ending be more effective if it came earlier than it does? Does the ending leave too much to our imagination?*
2. *Is there a surprise ending? If so, is it adequately prepared for?*

The Point of View

The author may tell the story impersonally, as the author; he may have one of the characters tell it—either the chief character or one of the minor figures; or the author may tell the story as the author, but from the point of view of one of the characters. Each of these three ways provides a distinct point of view. It may seem at first that the third way is the same as the second, but this is not the case. In INNOCENCE, for example, the author tells the story from the child's point of view, but it is always the author and not the child who does the telling. Because we see as the child saw, and hear as she heard, the story is delightfully marked with the child's naïve reactions to what is done and said by others; yet at all times we sense the author's adult intelligence that selects the incidents and dialogue and lets us see their full significance through the little girl's misinterpretation.

Which of the three points of view is the best one in any particular case must depend upon the nature of the story. If the author does the telling impersonally, as the author, he can of course tell us everything we can wish to know, for he is omniscient. Furthermore, he can tell the story without bias or prejudice. These advantages are so great that most authors write from their own omniscient point of view.

If one of the characters tells the story, or if the author tells it from the point of view of one of the characters, the story will have an air of reality over and above what would otherwise attach to it; but a character can relate only what he himself sees or hears or reads, and one who tells the story must necessarily give his own individual interpretation of action, dialogue, and characters. Where the main character speaks to us, there is danger either that he will not tell us enough about himself or that he will appear conceited because he does present himself as the principal figure; if a minor character tells the story, these last

risks are slight, yet he is not likely to know so much of what goes on as the chief actor in the story does. When, however, the author does the telling from the point of view of one of the characters, there is no danger that the character will appear unpleasantly self-important, and if he is present throughout the story, we shall get all the information that we need to have, although not all that the author could give us in his own omniscient rôle.

There are two questions for us to ask when we judge the point of view in any story:

1. *What is the point of view?*
2. *What advantages and what disadvantages result from its selection in this particular story?*

Style

We may consider an author's style to be his general manner of expression. The style in which any story is written should always fit the story's emotional pitch or key. We may not on any particular occasion be able to prove that the style does this; but if it does not, we are pretty sure to be conscious of a lack of suitableness between style and emotional pitch.

There should also be some adaptation of the style to the kind of incident and the sort of people with which the story deals. When one of the characters tells the story, the author can attain this adjustment by using the diction and the sentence construction that the character would employ if he were actually to tell or write the story himself. Indeed, it is necessary that the author do this or noticeably fail to make the story convincing.

The very suitability of style to incident and characters will sometimes prove a story to be so unpleasant or commonplace as to be distasteful. For truth to life is not everything. We resent a parade of repulsive or even cheap material in literature just as we resent it in life, and the fact that brutality or banality is faithfully represented in language that is uncouth or low or utterly commonplace, is no excuse for the author's use of material which may be characterized by any of these terms. Art that employs unworthy material degrades itself.

Where an author tells a story himself from the point of view of one of the characters, his task is made difficult by the need of reflecting to some extent the character's attitude of thought and feeling, at the

same time keeping in the main his own manner of speech. What the author must do is modify his own expression just enough to tint it with the characteristics of the person whose point of view he is taking. For the most part this modification will not go beyond the choice of words, since the point of view will be made evident by what is said rather than by the manner of saying it.

An author's style may be suitable to his material and to the emotional tone of his story and at the same time contribute some grace or charm of its own. Where this is the case our pleasure in the story is distinctly greater than it would be without any attractiveness in the style, but it may very easily be that we shall not be able to say what it is that gives the style its attractiveness. Matters of cadence, the finer qualities of sound, and subtle values in the associations that attach to words, are admittedly difficult to analyze. It will be enough for us to recognize that a style is pleasing when it adds distinction to a story.

The following are the points to consider in judging style:

1. *Are we conscious that the style is in any way unsuited to the emotional tone of the story?*
2. *Are we conscious that the style is not well adapted to the nature of the story material?*
   Is the style distasteful because it reflects objectionable or cheaply commonplace qualities in the story material?
3. *If one of the characters tells the story, does he seem to express himself as such a person would do in actual life?*
4. *If the author tells the story from the point of view of one of the people in it, what evidence do we find that he has modified his style to reflect this person's characteristics?*
5. *Are we conscious of an attractive quality in the style?*

NOTES AND QUESTIONS

GOLD-MOUNTED GUNS

THIS is a story where we are most interested in what happens. The setting is for the most part merely suggested. We know that the action must take place in and near a small settlement in the West a generation ago, but in only two scenes is any definite part of the background presented to us, and then not more than vaguely. Yet the picturesqueness of the western cowman's life and habits adds distinctly to the appeal of the story; in no other environment, for example, could men carry guns as a matter of course, or show off-hand a mastery of the technique of their use. The theme is important but not highly original. The story does not present the only case in fiction where a young man at first sees a glamour of adventure in a life of crime but comes to realize its meanness and cowardice and so turns back from it; neither is it the first story where a supposed criminal is a law officer.

But the plot is so skilfully contrived that we are kept in suspense throughout the story. The suspense is centered in the main character. At first we wish to know how the supposed Pecos Tommy will conduct himself in young Arblaster's attempt to prove his fitness to be a desperado's assistant; later we come to wonder, with Arblaster, at the older man's conduct; and then comes the final sudden surprise which, like a flash of lightning, illuminates the entire situation.

Compression is a desirable quality in a short story, and GOLD-MOUNTED GUNS is notably compressed. There is nothing which is not needed for our understanding of the characters and action. In the crispness with which it is written, the story is like a piece of good journalistic composition.

Questions

1. Is the plot convincing? Give the reasons for your opinion.
2. What is the climax of the story? Is it dramatic? Where does the ending come in relation to it?

3. Is the surprise justified by what precedes the lean man's disclosure of his identity?
4. How are the characters portrayed? (See pages 439, 440.)
5. In what order would you put the four characters in the story if you arranged them according to the degree in which their personalities are clearly and distinctly presented?
6. Is the story one in which it is proper to make any of the characters merely *types;* that is, characters who are not given distinct personalities, but who act and speak as most other people would do that are of the same age and sex and condition in society? Which, if any, of the characters are type characters?
7. The description of people and background is in most cases limited to short phrases or single words. Mention as many single words as you can which help to present vivid sense pictures.
8. Show briefly that all four unities are preserved. (Action, time, place, effect).
9. Is the beginning an effective one? Why?
10. Do you consider that the story is told from the point of view of one of the characters?
11. Would the story make a good movie? Explain your opinion.
12. What are you likely to remember longest about the story?

ENGLAND TO AMERICA

This was one of the most notable "war stories" to appear either in England or America. But the fact that it is still a very moving piece of fiction shows it not to owe its effectiveness to any particular timeliness in its original publication.

To judge from the title and from the fact that the ending comes long after the climax, we may well decide that the author wrote the story with the theme uppermost in mind. It is true that, remote as we are from the war, the theme must be less striking to us than to the first readers of the story; but our interest in the characters and in the puzzle-problem of the story is so great that we do not need to be strongly impressed by the theme.

The situation that the story presents is a puzzle to Skipworth Cary and a problem to his English hosts. As we read the story it is a puzzle, for then we see the situation through young Cary's eyes; after-

ward, when we look back, we are conscious of the problem, because then we see the circumstances of the case as the Sherwoods saw them.

Read again what was said on pages 439, 440 about the character drawing in ENGLAND TO AMERICA. If while you read the story you visualized the men and women in it (i.e., saw them clearly in imagination), you probably gave them the faces and figures of people you have known; you would almost be forced to do this, because, while the characters are real and have distinctive personalities, their features and habitual expressions are not described.

Questions

1. Just where in the story is the theme definitely expressed?
2. What is the climax of the story? Why is it proper to have the ending come as long after the climax as it does?
3. What is the emotional effect? Show that it is sustained throughout. Do you think that at any time the sentiment becomes mere sentimentality?
4. Show that the story is told from Cary's point of view.
5. If Cary is quick enough and sensitive enough to perceive the constraint in the attitude of his hosts, why is it that he does not guess its cause?
6. The average reader does not guess the cause, either. Why not?
7. As Americans, we should be well satisfied to have such a man as Skipworth Cary represent us among English ladies and gentlemen. Show that Cary is imaginative, enthusiastic, impulsive, and warm hearted.
8. Each of the four English characters moves us to pity and admiration, though in a different way. Which of the four arouses these feelings to the greatest extent?
9. Can you find any expressions of Cary's that show him to be a Southerner? Name some of his colloquial or slangy expressions which are characteristically American rather than British.
10. What type of exposition does the story have? (See pages 446, 447.)

THE WHIRLIGIG OF LIFE

THE WHIRLIGIG OF LIFE is a typical O. Henry story. We find in it the compression of material and the journalistic crispness of narration

that mark all the short stories which he wrote. Here is his humor; and here is the sureness in the selection of just the right word, that is a further characteristic of his work. Like nearly all of O. Henry's stories, the chain of incidents here is short: most of his stories relate what is really mere anecdote, and this one is no exception. THE WHIRLIGIG OF LIFE does not show the exaggeration which keeps so many of his pieces from being more than mere clever and amusing skits. There is much full-fibred human nature woven into it, and neither characters nor incidents violate probability. The pathos is genuine and developed with artistic restraint.

No story would be characteristic of O. Henry's work that did not have a surprise ending. Here there is a sort of double surprise: probably we do not expect to see the mountain pair re-united, and certainly we do not expect to have the divo'ce first halt the re-union and then be rendered inoperative by the ceremony of marri'ge—for which the fee is five dollars.

Questions

1. Show that the story must be told by the author, as the author, or lose its attractiveness.
2. Show that the re-uniting of the Bilbros is not an illogical ending of the story, despite the complaints that they lodge against each other.
3. Which method of character portrayal does the author employ?
4. What does Benaja's legal phraseology show us about his nature?
5. The dialect may be difficult if we interpret it only by the eye. But if we read it either aloud, or silently to our inner ear, it becomes readily intelligible. Does it seem authentic?
6. As in GOLD-MOUNTED GUNS, another story marked by compression of material, the description here, both of people and background, is limited to single but effective strokes. Point out several vividly descriptive details.
7. A good deal of the local color in THE WHIRLIGIG OF LIFE occurs in the manners and customs. Give several examples of such local color.
8. Would the story end more effectively if the last paragraph were omitted? Explain your opinion.
9. How would you classify THE WHIRLIGIG OF LIFE as to type?

THE PENALTIES OF ARTEMIS

It is instinctive in all of us to shrink from invasions of physical privacy. In most of us this instinct does not exceed a certain average (and therefore normal) intensity; in a few it is abnormally weak, and in others abnormally strong. Often an unpleasant experience will operate to increase one's instinctive reserve in the matter of physical relations with other people—at least for the time being. This is the theme in Mrs. Gerould's story; and because its presentation is the main aim or purpose of The Penalties of Artemis, we classify the story as one of theme.

Not only is the title unusual, but it implies the nature of the story. Artemis was the patron divinity of unmarried women. If we fancy her as still exercising her power and displeased at the necessarily small degree of privacy in Persis Lambert's life on the coral island, we may imagine her punishing the innocent victim of circumstances by increasing her instinctive physical reticence to such a morbid extent that the girl would break her engagement in her dread of again suffering any invasion of her full physical freedom.

The story has not the compression of material that marks Gold-Mounted Guns and The Whirligig of Life. Mrs. Gerould is concerned with picturing the development of a state of feeling in Persis Lambert, and she must give us a wealth of detail if she is to make that development convincing.

The situation that the author presents is interesting, and in working it out she shows respect for the innate dignity of human nature. We see two people who are suddenly thrust from the height of civilization into the most primitive sort of existence, yet each preserves his or her self respect by keeping the respect of the other. Only superior people can do this. The annals of the American and Canadian Northwest are full of instances where two trappers or prospectors, forced to spend the winter snowbound together in a small cabin, come to hate each other; and frequently this hatred has led even to murder. Of course, if Angier is really in love with Miss Lambert, his regard for her will make it easier for him to act so as to retain her respect; but her dislike for him will at the same time tend to make him bitter.

Questions

1. We are left in doubt as to whether Persis will continue to feel that she cannot marry Tony. Show that the author would have violated unity of time and action if she had extended the story and made Persis change her attitude after a further lapse of time.
2. There is much more description in this story than in the three that precede it. Show that the setting is important enough here to warrant a considerable amount of description.
3. Are the descriptive details vivid enough to make the background seem real?
4. Is there anything to show where Tony and Persis live? Is the matter important?
5. What is the author's method of character portrayal?
6. Can you point to details in the speech of the two castaways that show them to preserve their conventional manner of expression, though at times they must needs speak of unconventionally personal matters?
7. Do you think that Angier is in love with Persis? Explain your opinion.
8. What type of exposition is employed in the story?
9. What is the climax?

TOL'ABLE DAVID

The theme is novel, but the characters and the action that give story form to the theme, are more important than the basic idea. The theme provides the title: David Kinemon is like his biblical prototype; he kills a Goliath—the Hatburns—at least as terrible as the giant of the Old Testament. Instead of a pebble from a sling, the American David shoots bullets from a revolver. He is a real David, with all the cool courage and ready skill of the biblical shepherd-hero,—not merely a *tol'able* one as he modestly believes.

Mr. Hergesheimer is noted for the vivid quality of his sense pictures. More than most writers he knows the value of appeals to senses other than sight, and in his sight pictures he is likely to make a greater use of color than writers customarily employ. This sensory quality of his work is illustrated in the present story.

Questions

1. What is the author's method of character portrayal?
2. Ranse Bilbro, in THE WHIRLIGIG OF LIFE, is a mountain man; do you see any similarity of type between him and the Kinemon men? In which of the two stories are the characters more clearly individualized?
3. What is the emotional effect of the story?
4. There is a large element of local color in TOL'ABLE DAVID. Show that the setting is important enough to warrant as much description of background and manners and customs as the author gives.
5. Mention descriptive details that present appeals to senses other than sight. Point out words that indicate color.
6. Can you identify the locality? (Among the rest of the evidence, note the use of the term *tol'able* and the fact that at meal time the mother eats only after the men of the family have finished.)
7. In TOL'ABLE DAVID the dialect is not so strongly marked as in THE WHIRLIGIG OF LIFE. An author is justified in merely indicating the color of local speech without fully representing it. Is this what Mr. Hergesheimer has done here, or do you suppose the dialect of the TOL'ABLE DAVID locality is less strongly marked than in the Tennessee of O. Henry's story?
8. Show that TOL'ABLE DAVID observes all the unities.
9. What type of exposition does the author employ?
10. What is the climax? Is the relation of the ending to the climax the most effective one for the story?

THE KITCHEN GODS

The plot is very slight here, and most of our interest lies in the picturesque setting. Physical background, manners and customs, the speech of the characters, their dress, their attitudes of thought, are all attractive in their novelty and colorfulness. After our first reading of the story we should go over it slowly enough to visualize both the action and the picture details.

Though the story is primarily one of local color, yet the effect is an important element. THE KITCHEN GODS ends unhappily; but there is no violence in the ending, which strikes a note of gentle sadness rather

than crushing tragedy. There is nothing emotionally discordant in the story. Gentleness and the charm of delicate, fragile things mark the start and continue to characterize the piece. The note of unhappiness comes in unobtrusively, as an element essential to the helplessness of lovely little things like the lillies and Dong-Yung herself. The great wife's treatment of the small wife intensifies this tone of unhappiness, and both the strangeness of the "Jesus Way" as Dong-Yung hears of it, and her trepidation at Foh-Kyung's treatment of the Kitchen Gods, deepen it still further. The quiet life of the upper class Chinese household provides a perfect background against which to watch the blooming and the fading of the small wife's joy, and her final act of devotion is so flower-like that we are neither surprised nor shocked. The story is a notable example of unified effect.

The Chinese characters are individualized, but we cannot understand them fully, because orientals are not fully understandable to westerners. "East is East and West is West, and never they twain shall meet," wrote Kipling, who had lived years in India and knew the inscrutable nature of Eastern life.

Questions

1. How does the author show us what kind of people her characters are?
2. What qualities does Foh-Kyung show that make us respect and admire him?
3. Show that the missionaries are sympathetic toward their callers. (Note that the word "priest," as it is applied to the missionary, is used in its general sense of "man of God." Since this priest is a married man, we realize that he is not a Roman Catholic.)
4. The dialogue must be given to us in English, of course, and yet it would be a mistake to represent the speech of the Chinese characters by terse, idiomatic English. How has the author secured an oriental quality in the dialogue.
5. Presumably the missionaries would actually speak Chinese to Foh-Kyung and Dong-Yung. What general differences do you note between the expression of the missionaries and that of the two Chinese?

6. Dong-Yung is shocked at being embraced by the foreign woman. Why?
7. From what point of view is the story told?
8. What is the climax of the story? Show that the story would lose in effectiveness if we were given details of Dong-Yung's death.

CLOTHES MAKE THE MAN

Better than any other writer, Booth Tarkington can assume the point of view of the adolescent. Willie Baxter is as well known a character as any in modern American fiction, and he deserves to be because he is not merely true to life,—he is the very personification of youth that has not yet reached adult-hood but has left childhood behind.

Willie is drawn sympathetically. Of course he is funny, for his typical lack of perspective and his inability to judge values lead him to ridiculous extremes. But he makes our heart-strings quiver, too, because he is so often desperately unhappy—or unhappily desperate—at his inability to grasp the unattainable; that the unattainable may not be worth grasping, does not make him less appealing.

To show Willie's portrait in full light, at least one of his parents must seem unsympathetic. This is Mr. Baxter. Undoubtedly he loves his boy, but like most parents he is too harassed by his work and the nervous stress of adult life to be patient. He has become a man and so has put away not only childish, but adolescent, things and cannot be calm enough to view them tolerantly. Mrs. Baxter, more imaginative, is closer in spirit to her son. It is she who saves Willie from being finally overwhelmed—and incidentally keeps the story a comedy. For if Willie were unable to go to the party in the only way he thinks he can go, the story would not be funny, but downright tragic. Mental agony is never funny.

Questions

1. Can you show that the emotional tone of the story is consistently humorous, despite Willie's unhappiness?
2. Willie is very real, but he is a real *type* rather than a highly individualized boy. In the light of the *Notes* on this story, do you think this a fault in the author's characterization?
3. Which of the five characters do you think is least a type character?

4. Mrs. Baxter is to us the only wholly non-humorous character in the story, and yet she is the one who most sees the humor in what goes on about her. How do you account for this?
5. Is Genesis' dialect too strongly marked to be easily read? Do you think it is authentic? Would his speech be less funny if the dialect were slighter?
6. Show that every character is necessary to the working out of the plot.
7. Do you consider that because of the long scene between Jane and Genesis, the story lacks unity of action? If so, should you wish to have the scene condensed?
8. What is the relation in this story between ending and climax? Would it be an anti-climax to show Willie at the party?
9. Some of the humor in the story is contributed by the author's style, for at times Mr. Tarkington uses a formality of expression that is purposely too great for the occasion. An illustration is his saying, "In the matter of his dress, Genesis had always been among the most informal of his race." What other instances of this quality in the style can you find in CLOTHES MAKE THE MAN?

THE MONKEY'S PAW

We may classify this as a story of theme, but both the dramatic quality of the action and the emotional effect are unusually strong.

Is this a story of the supernatural, or are the incidents to be explained by coincidence? Whatever we decide about this, the stark power of the story makes it something we can never forget. There are two climaxes, and as we pass from the first to the second, the dramatic intensity of the situation increases and horror is piled upon despair; the end comes in a *crescendo* of strong feeling that leaves us emotionally gasping.

Questions

1. Where in the story do you find an expression of the theme?
2. The beginning is pitched in a humorous key. Do you think that because of this the story violates unity of effect, or do you believe that the humor at the start is meant to be in legitimate contrast to the effect that is to come? (See page 446.)

3. When the one-act play written from this story was played in a New York Drama League tournament, the players were denied first prize because the judges held that the play violated the unity that should characterize a one-act piece. Do you think that in the story the lapse of time between sections II and III produces a violation of either unity of time or unity of action? Explain your answer.
4. Is the setting adequate? Do you know in what locality the action of the story takes place? Why is there so little description of background?
5. Do you believe that in the story the Paw has some occult power, or do you think that the seeming results of the three wishes would have happened anyway? Explain your opinion.
6. Show how, in the first section of the story, the attitude that Mr. Morris takes toward the Paw, and the disbelief of the Whites in its power, tend to disarm our suspicion that the author is trying to make us believe in an impossibility.
7. The characters are important for what they do—not for themselves. Mr. and Mrs. White are real to us because of the little domestic touches that they contribute in Section I, and because of the sincerity of the feeling that they show later on. What are the domestic touches that tend to make the Whites seem real to us?
8. What was the third wish? Why doesn't the author tell it to us?
9. What are the two climaxes? Show that the second is more emotionally moving than the first.

THE TRAWLER

In this character story, Mr. Connolly pictures the nobility of one who was every inch a man, and a man's man at that. Hugh Glynn is a deep-sea fisherman; his thoughts and speech are redolent of the sea, and the tonic cleanness and vitality of the ocean's windy spaces are in the tale.

A heroic character, and a heroic figure of a man, Hugh goes to a heroic death. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." It is a good thing for us to know a man like Hugh Glynn, even if we know him only in a book.

The style is notable. It is racy, direct English, but there is a quality in the sentence construction which we find in the speech of Irish people. Its effect is to give the rhythm of the sentence a slight but delightful lilt, which our usual American speech quite lacks. It has the effect, too, of giving an attractive old-time flavor to the story. Simon Kippen's ancestors, like those of other Gloucester fisher-folk, may well have come from the west of Ireland, and speech characteristics brought from across the water might easily persist for a long time in such a community as the Gloucester of some years back. Certainly the style suits the nature of the story. The lilting sentences have almost the quality of an irregular meter, and this poetic element with its flavor of old times, is well adapted to a plain man's telling of gallant deeds that gallant men have done as simply as they breathed.

Questions

1. This is the first story in the collection where one of the characters is the narrator. What values would the story lose if the author did the telling?
2. The emotional effect results in large part from the fact that the story is concerned with the simpler, more fundamental human feelings. Show that it is with such feelings that the story deals.
3. Does THE TRAWLER illustrate more than one way of portraying characters?
4. Why do Hugh and Simon express so little bitterness toward Saul?
5. Point out half a dozen instances where the sentence construction is not that of ordinary American usage.
6. Does Simon's use of technical sea terms weaken your interest? Could he have avoided their use?
7. The descriptions are often vivid and beautiful. Point out several that you consider remarkable.
8. The last two paragraphs are a sort of epilogue to the story. But their poetic quality lifts them above any suspicion of an anti-climax. Show that these paragraphs, the last particularly, are so rhythmic that they practically constitute blank verse.
9. What other paragraphs can you find in THE TRAWLER which have a metrical quality that suits the poetic nature of the thought?

AS A DOG SHOULD

Dog stories almost always concern either the sagacity or the loyalty of the animal who is the principal character. In this case, dormant world-old instincts are aroused in Ump, and his devotion takes a heroic form in consequence. What Ump sees and hears and smells in the forest brings to him "wisps and shreds and suggestions of memories that had never before come alive in his brain." An intense loyalty kindles in his spirit and flames into supreme sacrifice.

There is pathos in the story. In any story of a dog there must be an element of pathos, if the story truly reflects the conditions of his life. Men have bred the dog to be part of an existence in which many of his instincts must be refused expression. He is an alien in a land of thought and feeling where he can never be a citizen. Throughout the story Ump is a pathetic little figure, and most of all when his ancestral instincts are reviving, for the call of the wild is a disturbing call, and though Ump meets its challenge, he does so without encouragement or sympathy from his human friends. Even the slight understanding that they might give him, they fail utterly to extend.

Questions

1. What is the theme of the story?
2. What hint do we get early in the story of the change that is to come in Ump's attitude toward his surroundings and his master?
3. What does Alice mean by the word *civilized,* when she refers (page 205) to Ump as a civilized dog? Explain the Doctor's answer.
4. Is Ump's attack upon the cougar inconsistent with his flight from the squirrel? Is Alice's statement that the squirrel "had the drop" on the little dog, an adequate explanation of his seeming cowardice?
5. The human characters are less important than Ump, yet the Doctor and Alice are clearly individualized. What method of character portrayal does the author employ in regard to these two characters?
6. The emotional effect—one of pathos—is important in the story. The pathos lies in the fact that Ump's size, his way of life, and the

attitude of his human friends, all make it difficult for him to express his real nature. Point out the parts of the story where the pathos is strongest.

7. Show that there is humor in the story, but that it is mingled with pathos.
8. Where do you find the climax of the story? Show that the last paragraph, though perhaps an anticlimax, is highly effective.
9. The revival of ages-old instincts, even in a dog, is a somewhat poetic subject. What instances can you find where the author's account of Ump's experiences is marked by poetic terms or picturesque comparisons?

BLUE MURDER

In many ways this story is unique. The highly dramatic events are unusual in themselves; Blossom is an uncommon character, and Camden Bluedge a strikingly novel one; while the staggering surprise at the end is unlike anything we have read before.

Until we come to the end, we are likely to consider BLUE MURDER as merely a story of dramatic interest; but the ending reveals the fact that it has presented a puzzle which we did not even see, let alone solve. Until Cam takes the stallion to his smithy, most readers will have no suspicion of the part that the feeble-minded, powerfully-muscled smith has played in the deaths of his two brothers; and not till the last sentence in the story does full conviction come to us that the horse has not killed Jim and Frank.

Yet the surprise at the end is legitimate. Professor Blanche Colton Williams, the Chairman of the O. Henry Memorial Award Committee, wrote in the introduction to the 1925 volume of prize stories:

"In the opinion of the Chairman . . . 'Blue Murder' is the best story of 1925. . . . [The] end rushes on with the relentlessness, the inevitability of fate; and in its light the reader looks back along the way he has travelled, to mileposts pointing out that unguessed, if inevitable, dénouement [ending]. Nowadays the rereading of a short narrative is rarely attended by any feeling save of tedium. 'Blue Murder' is good for two repetitions; then for a third, to fix the reasons for praise of the skill which created, after a series of unique events, a specially new terminal shock."

In several of his stories Mr. Steele has drawn characters that show abnormal mentality. Camden's brain is warped as well as slow. We realize his slowness, but our failure to realize his lack of mental balance keeps us from suspecting him of his brothers' murder. Camden is true to life: a mentally unbalanced man might very well resent and brood over both the frequent taunt of his brothers that he was "scared," and the ridicule which he had brought upon himself by his absurd gift of a box of apples to the apple grower's daughter. Such a man might show extreme patience in biding his time for revenge, and extreme cunning in carrying out the murderous intent that would finally take form in his twisted brain.

Blossom is skilfully drawn. She is what is known as a *high-grade moron*—one who is subnormal, but entirely sane. Her "dependence on physical touch," her lack of deep affection, her craving for attention, her complete selfishness, and her lack of womanly dignity mark her as a child in all but bodily development.

Questions

1. What hint can you find in the story that Camden may not be quite so "dumb" as he seems to be? What remark of Frank's shows that he considers Camden to be on the verge of insanity?
2. When does Camden make his decision to murder Jim and throw the blame on the horse? When does Camden discover that Blue Murder is unshod? How does this discovery change his plans?
3. After reading the story you realize that Frank finds out that Camden murdered Jim. How does Frank discover this? Do you think Camden suspects that Frank knows he killed Jim? Why is Frank so anxious to continue the hunt for the stallion? If Frank had lived, what, do you think, would he have done about Camden's murder of Jim?
4. The point of view is that of the author who writes only what he would observe if he were present at the various scenes. He knows who the people in the story are and what they have done, for he presumably has observed them before. Occasionally he gives us a glimpse of some of the ideas in the mind of one or another of the characters, but in each of these cases what we are told is only something that we may consider the character as "saying to himself." Compare the effectiveness of this point of

view with any other that might have been selected for this particular story.

5. In what part of the country does the story seem to be set? Does the speech of the characters help you to identify the locality? Should the author have been more definite than he is about the place?
6. Show that Camden's speech is highly characteristic of his lack of mental keenness.
7. With each of the three deaths the story rises to a high pitch of interest, so that we may say that there are three climaxes; but the last is certainly the climax of the story as a whole. Is the very last scene of the story necessary? Should you prefer the story to have been prolonged so that further explanations could be presented? Would this have weakened the unity of the story in any way? If the story had been prolonged, would the ending have been less striking than it is?
8. Mr. Steele's style is admirable. It is so simple and clear that we do not notice it as we read; but it is highly figurative, and this quality adds a colorfulness and a vividness to the incidents and the descriptive details. Point out several figurative expressions.

'LIJAH

In several ways this is like other stories that we may have read of poor and proud Southern gentry. But 'Lijah sets Mr. Smith's story off by itself. The impoverished, high principled Judge, representative of the best in old-style Southern gentility, is a delightful character, but by no means a unique figure in fiction. 'Bama is much the same competent, loyal, outspoken servant that has appeared in other tales of post-Civil War days in the South. The two Northerners represent the practical spirit of modern business life that is needed to furnish such a contrast as we might expect to find with the idyllic before-the-war conditions on the old plantation; and the hill forty is the unsuspected resource that will eventually save the apparently helpless old aristocrat from ruin. But never did such a bodiless servant as 'Lijah shine shoes o' nights anywhere else than at Holmacres.

Because of 'Lijah, the story succeeds, despite the not wholly satisfactory nature of the exposition. For the exposition is long, and we

feel that the story might have been a little stronger if the author had contrived to show conditions by the speech and actions of the characters rather than by out-and-out explanation. His device of making many of the circumstances plain by showing the Judge's thoughts about them, is not entirely convincing.

But Mr. Smith may not properly be charged with presenting, in the value of the hill forty, a circumstance that is not inherent in the story, for we know that the Northerners have come South to buy the mica deposit. Their decision to pay a just price develops fairly out of the facts of the story, since it is the Judge's sacrifice of his comfort and dignity that causes them to act as they do.

The case illustrates what Lowell wrote in one of his poems:

> As one lamp lights another, nor grows less,
> So nobleness enkindles nobleness.

The Judge's care of his visitors—something far beyond courtesy—stirs their sense of fair dealing. Beneath their attitude of relentless business efficiency, they are honorable gentlemen, and though they remind themselves that "business is business—always," they know in their hearts that they cannot profit unduly by their knowledge of the mica deposit.

Like most humorous stories that ring true, 'LIJAH mingles humor with something else. 'Bama is an almost entirely humorous character, and so is the imaginary 'Lijah; but we smile at the dear old Judge only because of the difference between actual reality and what he bravely pretends reality to be.

Mr. Smith has dramatized this story as a one-act play, which has proved as successful as the original story.

Questions

1. What is the theme of the story? Does the inscription beneath the fire mantel help you to determine the theme?
2. How does the older stranger learn that there is no 'Lijah? How does the younger one become aware of the fact that 'Lijah is nonexistent?
3. Show that 'Bama has much dramatic ability. Both she and the Judge tell of 'Lijah's habits; which of the two contributes the more effective details to the portrayal of 'Lijah's personality?

4. Counting 'Lijah as a character, show that the story illustrates the three ways of portraying character that were mentioned on page 439.
5. Contrast the two types of Southern servant represented by Bama and 'Lijah.
6. 'Bama's speech is shown as strongly marked dialect. What the Judge says does not appear as dialect, though, since he is an Alabaman who has probably spent all his life in the neighborhood of the Tombigbee River, his speech must sound very different from that of the Northerners. How does the author—himself a native Alabaman—explain his not indicating the peculiarities of the Judge's speech? Do you think he should have tried to show its Southern flavor?
7. The ending of the story is highly effective. If the Judge had not written the advertisement, how might the story have ended? Compare this possible ending with the one that the author gives us.

BASQUERIE

This is probably to be classed as a love story; but for most readers its chief interest will lie in the picturesque Basque people and the picturesque life they lead in their picturesque mountain home.

For some years Americans have known vaguely of the Basque country as a district where a sturdy folk live sturdy lives bravely and cleanly, and keep old ways and an old language. Mrs. Kelly knows the district well, and she gives us a picture in full color and sharp focus in place of our shadowy ideas of Pyrenees life. The Basque language is a very old one, and not at all like French or Spanish. As Esteban says, because their own language is a difficult one, Basques are good linguists. Naturally, the Basques who mingle with their French and Spanish neighbors must learn a good deal of French and Spanish, for their neighbors cannot learn the more difficult Basque tongue. Esteban, having lived in England and the Americas, speaks English well, and his grandmother learned English in her convent school.

The characters in the story are clearly and vividly drawn. If the matriarch is the outstanding figure, it is not because she is more clearly pictured than some of the others, but because hers is the most striking personality. We can, of course, most easily sympathize with Emily,

because she is most like us. Her sophistication is her undoing. She loves Esteban, but in her cynical perspective, "love is so cheap" that until she has lost her opportunity for happiness she does not realize that she is turning away from the best that life has to give. Yet her false attitude toward life is the fault of her training more than of her nature, and we feel that henceforth she will judge life with a truer feeling for real values, for Love has pierced her selfishness if it has not shattered it.

As a rule, a short story cannot portray a change in the nature of a character, because any such change is likely to develop slowly. But a single experience can go far toward showing to a man or woman the falsity of an attitude that does not genuinely reflect his or her essential nature. And certainly Emily's confidence in her sophisticated viewpoint is seriously shaken. She has come face to face with unflinching loyalty and steadfast devotion to ideals, and her statement that she is "not good enough" shows her to be shaken in her mean and shallow view of life. When Mrs. Kelly continued this story to novel length, she carried on this change to its full development. In the novel Emily wins back her happiness with Esteban when she has become worthy to become a member of the Urruty home.

Questions

1. What do you consider the theme of the story to be?
2. Does the story make proper preparation for the revelation of Esteban's wealth? Point out the details that might have shown you that he was more than a poor peasant.
3. How would you answer the question which Esteban asks Emily, "What is a lady?" Which is more a lady, Emily or Esteban's grandmother?
4. What is the author's method of character portrayal?
5. Despite her education and her worldly wisdom, Emily is not conscious of any essential superiority over the inmates of the *etcheonda,* nor do they seem to have any inferiority complex. How do you account for this?
6. On page 307, when Emily sees Esteban with Stancia, we read, "and something within her, some larger thing that had come into her heart with Esteban, was glad." What do you understand this "larger thing" to be?

7. Show that the unities of time and place are observed in the story, despite the length of time that it covers and its changes in locality.
8. The author uses many French, Spanish, and Basque terms. Why do you suppose she does this?
9. Why is the setting an important element in this story? Point out several descriptive passages which please you.
10. From what point of view is the story told?
11. The conversation at the *etcheonda* is carried on in French, for Emily does not understand Basque. Yet it is chiefly in the speech of Bette, the little girl, that the author makes the French construction evident by a literal rendering into English. Why does she do this in Bette's case more fully than in the speech of the others?

MISS HINCH

A detective story is one which presents a problem related to some crime. The problem usually concerns the discovery of the criminal's identity; but in the case of Miss Hinch it has to do with the apprehension of a criminal whose guilt is known. In any detective story, careful plot construction is the most important element. The author must tell the story so as to give the reader all the information that the latter thinks he is entitled to have, but the author must manage to keep the reader from solving the problem. Furthermore, the story must be convincing: the solution must be logical and must not depend upon any evidence that is not brought to the reader's notice in the course of the story.

Mr. Harrison's story is strikingly novel and effective. At the start, two characters are brought to our attention in such a way that we can guess that one of the two must be the criminal, and the other the detective. *Which is which* provides a tense and absorbing uncertainty. We know that one of the two seemingly mild and gentle individuals possesses a deadly and menacing personality, and that rather than be caught she would shoot to kill. The problem of the story is a double one, because, added to the puzzle as to the identity of the two characters, there is the question of how the battle of wits between the two women will end.

The plot is worked out with extreme care. Every bit of action and dialogue is natural under the circumstances, yet until we approach the end we are unable to seize upon anything as a proof of the identity of either of the two chief characters. Like BLUE MURDER, this story merits several readings, for a single reading will not enable us to recognize the skill with which the significance of every bit of evidence is hidden.

It is to be noted that this story was written some years ago. This accounts for the "ticket-chopper" and for the fact that the traffic is shown as much lighter at midnight than it is now at that hour.

Questions

1. The point of view is that of the author who writes only what he might observe. Is this the best point of view for this story?
2. When did you first form a definite opinion as to which of the two main characters is Miss Hinch and which is Jessie Dark? Did your opinion prove to be correct? Upon what evidence did you base it?
3. At various times it is plain that both the old woman and the minister wish to avoid being separated. Show that such a desire is not necessarily evidence as to identity. At other times each of the two seeks to leave the other; show that this, again, is not necessarily an evidence of identity.
4. The old woman makes a misstatement about where she spent the evening. Do you see that, whoever she is, it is clever in her to make this misstatement?
5. Why does Miss Hinch test the genuineness of the old woman's facial wrinkles? Does one of the two women maintain her rôle more consistently than the other? Does either make any serious mistake? Would a man be likely to carry a *white* pencil?
6. What purpose is served by the pencil's having *blue* lead?
7. Is there any incident or bit of dialogue that in your opinion is improbable?
8. How is the exposition presented?
9. So far as the main figures in the story are concerned, the characterizations are assumed as rôles by Jessie Dark and Miss Hinch. The author must be careful not to show flaws in the two charac-

terizations unless he wishes the real characters to show them as faults in their acting. Is he successful in handling this problem?

10. What is the climax of the story? What is the relation of ending and climax?

A SOURCE OF IRRITATION

This is an interesting study of contrasts. From a quiet English farm field, the scene shifts to the tumult of actual battle in front line trenches. From a meeting with his placid little niece, Sam Gates goes to mingle with German officers, soldiers engaged in actual fighting, and English officers in attendance at regimental headquarters. From munching his breakfast and thinning turnips, Sam crosses the channel in an airplane, escapes death in a German trench, faces shooting as a spy, and crosses the channel again. A further contrast is provided by Sam's failure to see the importance of the events in which he has a share. He finds "No story" in all the amazing occurrences.

We are interested in Sam on his own account. He is eccentric, but for all his slowness, his irritability, and the lack of imagination which results in his inability to grasp anything that is unusual, he has a dogged courage and an innate dignity that proclaim his essential manliness.

Ordinarily a story with such contrasts as this would lack unity of effect. But humor predominates throughout. Sam is so slow witted that he fails to realize the horror of his surroundings on the war front; and since for the most part we see what Sam sees, the horror does not touch us so deeply as does the humor of his failure to adjust himself to novel circumstances.

Questions

1. What is the theme of the story?
2. Is there anything in the story that you think could not have happened?
3. Sam's ideas for the most part are concerned with the familiar, commonplace things of his uneventful past experience. Show that these matters are prominently in his thoughts even when he is riding in the airplane.

4. Explain how it is that Sam can see no "noos" in the events related in the story.
5. What is the "source of irritation," and who is irritated?
6. What differences do you note between the manner and attitude of the German officers and the manner and attitude of the English officers?
7. The humor of the story depends upon the fact that Sam's mind is strictly of the one-track variety, and narrow-gauge at that. If we are to have the humor, we must have Sam's point of view: we must know what he sees and hears and thinks and says. The author gives us this, for he writes from Sam's point of view throughout. But he cannot limit himself entirely to the language that Sam might actually use, because Sam's vocabulary would be inadequate. Point out a number of expressions—not in Sam's actual remarks, however—which you think the author uses because they are expressions such as Sam might use.
8. The author is notably skilful in reflecting the speech peculiarities of his characters. He gives us the Norfolk dialect of Sam; the formal yet foreign English of the German officers; and the breezy, colloquial speech of the English officers. Select passages that clearly illustrate these three styles of expression.
9. Show that the ending is highly effective. Is it the climax of the story?

LEGEND

This is a successful story of effect, and it is as unusual as it is successful. From the opening to the end, a single note is sustained—that of quiet but impressive unreality. Yet it is sustained without apparent effort, for the skill of the author everywhere conceals the artistry that is needed to create and hold the vague intangibility that marks the story.

The murder and its consequences make a story out of what would otherwise be only a sketch. But the action is properly slight throughout the story, for vivid incident would be out of keeping with the note of unreality. The chief characters are vaguely drawn, though their physical appearance is definite enough; this is necessary if they are to supply the principal element of strangeness in the story. Nevertheless the quiet force in the personality of the Klinger sisters is unmistakable. From the minor characters, detail is artistically withheld until the trial

scene, and then only the witnesses are brought into any sharpness of outline. The setting is nowhere given in clear-cut detail. A simple, agricultural community is indicated, but there are no descriptions of natural scenery. Yet with all the lack both of striking action and of detail in setting and character delineation, the reader feels no inadequacy, for the simple incidents are definite, and the minor characters are so realistically commonplace as to call for little sharpness in their portrayal. The theme of the story is not easily grasped, perhaps, but it may be said to be the presentation of a phase of the mystery that underlies human personality and the relation of human powers to the forces of nature.

In a story of sustained effect, we look for unity in time and place and action, as well as in emotional tone. Unity of place is obvious in LEGEND. There is unity of time and action, too, for the story consists of a number of appearances of the Klinger sisters, and whether days, weeks, or months elapse between these is immaterial. It is well to have the murder committed while the narrator is away, for then the circumstances of the crime and the detail of the trial can be given together. Because the narrator could not have seen the murder anyway, little is lost in vividness by having the reader learn of it some months after it takes place, and unity of incident is definitely furthered.

Is the story improbable in its presentation of occult power on the part of the Klinger girls? The best answer is that we, as readers, believe the girls have such power. We do not think that either the father or his daughters had any hand in the murder, but we realize that the author is right in having the jury convict. The defense rests solely upon the girls' claim to this mysterious power, and we know that even if the men on the jury secretly credited this claim, they would probably be ashamed to confess to a belief in anything so far removed from accepted fact.

Questions

1. Why is it better to have a minor character tell the story than to have the author tell it *as the author*?
2. Is the beginning of the story an effective one? Explain your opinion.
3. What statement in the beginning of the story is repeated in the

conclusion? Is this repetition effective? Would another conclusion be better?

4. Mention all the details that the narrator observes, which tend to show the quality of unreality or strangeness in the appearance, speech, or action of the Klingers.
5. What is significant in the fact that when Charlotte Klinger is asked a question, she "seems to wait for it to reach her"?
6. In regard to the Klingers' history and manner of living, tell what details, told to the narrator by other characters, tend to show the quality of unreality or strangeness.
7. Why, do you suppose, is the name of the second sister not mentioned?
8. What dialect or divergence from standard speech do you find in LEGEND? Does it seem to be accurately and convincingly presented?
9. In your opinion is the character who tells the story a man or a woman? What detail is there in the story to support your opinion?
10. What statement in the story seems to explain the title?
11. Occasionally, and especially on page 371, the author deviates from the usual sentence form. What is this deviation? Is it effective? Do you like it?

INNOCENCE

There is a double source of interest here. The story is a good one, for theme, plot, characters, setting, and emotional tone combine to hold our attention. But it has the added quality of being told from a child's point of view in such a way that while we are always mindful of that point of view, we are not limited by it. We see everything as little Mary Alice saw it, but we also see it as it would have appeared to us if we had been in her place.

To those who have not lived in or near localities where life is primitive and the inhabitants highly clannish, Molly's vengeful attitude may seem exaggerated. But those who know such neighborhoods will realize that there is no exaggeration in Molly's attitude. The locality happens to be an undeveloped section of Florida; but conditions essentially the same may be found in any sparsely settled American district where the original settler stock has deteriorated till pride has become a

jealous resentment toward strangers, and independence a tendency toward violence in disregard of the law and even in defiance of it.

Questions

1. The author shows her characters clearly and vividly without, *as the author,* telling us anything about them. The most finished delineations are those of the child's mother, Charlie, and Charlie's wife. For each of these three, name the qualities that you think are most noticeable in the story. Why is the child's father less clearly drawn than her mother?
2. Show that the beginning of the story is a good one.
3. Mary Alice smelled the peanuts in the oven very loud. This is one of the many childish expressions that the author gives us, and their use is highly effective because of the point of view from which the story is told. What other expressions of the kind can you find?
4. Mary Alice would be sure to notice customs of her Aunt Molly's people that were different from those of her own Northern family. Name as many customs as you can that were new to the child. (Do you recall that in Tol'able David the mother ate after her husband and sons?) Can you guess why, when Molly greeted her guests, she said "Light 'n' come in"?
5. What do you consider the emotional tone of the story to be? Is there any humor?
6. Where is the climax of the story? What relation has the ending to the climax?

BECAUSE OF THE DOLLARS

A favorite practice of Conrad's is to put his story into the mouth of some minor character or some one who, while not concerned in the story itself, knows what has happened. In this case the actual narrator, the "I" of the story, relates what his friend Hollis told him. Davidson had told Hollis of the attack made upon him in the Malay settlement, but Hollis himself had seen all the men and women who figure in the story.

The practice makes for vividness of narrative, but because the story is given at second hand, the reader may sometimes find it a bit difficult to keep clearly in mind just who is speaking. Another habit of Con-

rad's, which also tends to mix the reader up to some extent, is exemplified in this story: this is his custom of starting at a given point, then going back to make certain explanations, and finally picking up the main thread of the narrative again.

The plan of BECAUSE OF THE DOLLARS is unusual. Each of the characters is described separately, and then, the explanations being out of the way, the story moves swiftly along its dramatic course to its inevitable end. First Davidson is portrayed, then Mrs. Davidson, then Bamtz and Laughing Anne, and lastly Fector, Niclaus, and the Frenchman. In almost any one's hands but Conrad's this plan would fail, for the reader's interest would lag; but the characters—except Fector and Niclaus, who are not drawn full-length—are so novel and striking that each one in turn holds our interest for his or her own sake, until the full cast has been introduced and we are ready for the action. To be exact, Mrs. Davidson is not a novel and striking character; yet in her case there is the contrast between the sweet nature that she seems to have and the mean little spirit that is really hers, and this contrast makes her interesting.

The story deals with adventure and sudden death; but it is far removed from the crudity that so often marks tales fashioned out of such material. The remarkable characterizations and the authentic and picturesque setting, raise it high above the plane of mere blood and thunder stories. Whether they are good or bad, the characters are intensely human, and their actions are thoroughly motivated. Conrad's stories never end as the reader expects them to. There are no *surprise endings*, as such; but his fiction is so much like life that we cannot see ahead to the end any more than we can in actual life. When the end comes, however, we realize that it is right, because no other end would be so nearly inevitable.

BECAUSE OF THE DOLLARS presents a story within a story. Though we are chiefly interested in the conspiracy to get the dollars that Davidson's ship carries, the matter of the conspiracy is only part of the enveloping story, which is the wreck of Davidson's married life. The title, while pointing to the fight in the Malay settlement, properly indicates the place that the fight has in the larger whole.

Questions

1. What is the emotional tone of the story? Is there any humor?

2. In your opinion, where does the exposition end? Is it too long? Do you consider it a more artistic exposition than that in 'Lijah?
3. The story reaches its highest point of interest in the killings that follow the attack on the ship. How do you explain the fact that the story ends so long after this? What is the climax of the story? Do you like the ending?
4 Conrad is known for his powers of vivid and colorful description. Pick out several expressions that you think present vivid or colorful descriptive details.
5. By definite references to passages in the story, show that only a person who had been in the far East could have written Because of the Dollars.
6. Show that the method of character drawing in this story is different from that in The Penalties of Artemis.
7. In the biographical sketch of Conrad it is said that the idea of loyalty is prominent in most of his stories. This may be loyalty to an individual, to an institution, or to an ideal. What three characters among those mentioned in Because of the Dollars show the quality of loyalty?
8. Conrad is not exaggerating when he paints so many colorful villains on one small canvas. The dregs of many nations are to be found in the far-eastern seaports today, and the condition was even more marked before the Great War. Show that the Frenchman, Bamtz, and Fector are very different from one another, both in appearance and in character. (Niclaus is perhaps less despicable than the others, and certainly he is less distinctive in character, though his appearance is distinctive enough.)
9. Discuss the matter of unity in the story. In your answer take up, separately, unity of time, of place, of action, and of emotional effect.

Part Three

APPENDIX

WRITING SHORT STORIES

THE writing of a short story is not an easy thing for anybody to do. A high school teacher would hardly be justified in asking his students to write short stories without his help, unless they had previously received some training in the several problems involved in short story composition. The editor believes that classes which read and study short stories may properly be given work in writing them; but he maintains that the work should be definitely guided by the instructor, and that when the writing of a complete story is first undertaken it ought to be divided into several definite assignments.

When a student is required to write a short story and left to himself to produce it, his difficulties are likely to be overwhelming. At once he will find himself at a loss for a satisfactory basic idea or theme. The chances are that all he can achieve in the way of a theme is something which he realizes is weakly sentimental or far-fetched or not genuinely original. The truth is that few people can originate worthwhile themes. Teachers are competent judges of short stories, but they will freely admit that the difficulty of originating themes has kept them from writing stories themselves.

Even if the student is so fortunate as to conceive a basic idea that is acceptable to himself and to his instructor, he will find the task that lies before him a complex and more or less bewildering one. He must construct the pattern of his plot, determine upon his characters, and select his setting, before he begins the actual writing. The matter of plot involves a number of problems: What incidents will best develop his theme? What should be their sequence and relative importance? What form should his exposition take? What ought his climax to be? What point of view will be best? The characters will present many difficulties: The student must, in his mind's eye, see clearly the men and women who are to figure in his story, he must determine the particular qualities that are to be most strongly marked in each, and he must decide what method to pursue in portraying his characters. Before he designs his plot pattern, he will have to determine whether his

story is to be set in the present or in some definite period of the past, for conditions of life largely shape the nature of incident. Before he decides upon his characters, he must know the locality in which his story is to be set, because race and region go far toward determining attitudes of thought and feeling. He must select a particular background, and he must decide upon the degree of definiteness it is to have.

Recognizing the complexity and difficulty of the work, the instructor will probably decide that it is best to take up one at a time the various problems involved in the production of a short story, or to require the writing of only a small part of a story at a given time. He may read most of a story to his students and require them to finish it. Or he may read all of a story but the exposition, and call upon the students for that. But if the instructor wishes to give his pupils a practical introduction to most of the phases of short story writing, he will have to devise a broader treatment of the subject than the sort of procedure that has just been mentioned.

What follows is a project plan that the editor has successfully employed with his own high school classes. It calls for the collaboration of an entire class in the writing of a single story.

> The instructor submits to his class several themes which the students discuss, and from which they select the one that the majority wish to use for the class story. (The instructor will have taken the themes from stories that he has read, but he does not announce the exact source of the themes.) The nature of the basic idea will, of course, largely determine the type of the story.
>
> The members of the class are then required to sketch (briefly) the plot of the story to be written, select a cast of characters, choose time and place, and determine the emotional tone. They submit this material in the form of a written outline or scenario. The students may well be cautioned to work up their theme into the simplest possible plot, with the fewest possible characters.
>
> The best of the scenarios is then determined. The teacher may make the choice after reading all of them. Or the class may be divided into groups, and each group be required to choose the best scenario submitted by its members; from the resulting selections, the class then makes a final choice.
>
> The best scenario is discussed by the entire class and improved in any way possible. In its final form the scenario is to be considered the official outline for the class story. The students then de-

cide, with the help of the teacher, how much of the story shall be written in a first instalment.

Each member of the class then writes this first instalment.

If the class has not previously been divided into groups, it must be so divided now, in order to permit a prompt selection of the best instalment. In each group the members read their work, and the group selects the best. These selections are then submitted to the class, which makes a final selection. The work so chosen is regarded as the official first instalment of the class story, and it is understood that the next instalment, which every one must submit, is to follow on after the official first instalment. The names of the characters will henceforth be those used in the first instalment, and this is posted in the classroom so as to be available at any time for reference. The class then determines the scope of the second section of the story.

The second instalment, and each of the subsequent ones, are selected in the same way, each being added, as soon as it is adopted, to those already posted in the classroom. The skilful teacher will contrive to limit the contribution of any one student, so that nobody shall actually write too much of the story. When the work has been completed, it may be well for the class to hear the original story read, from which the teacher took the theme that the class has used. A discussion of the differences between the original story and the work of the class may prove valuable.

In all their group and class discussions, the students should be encouraged to bear in mind, and to refer to, the presentation of short story features and characteristics on pages 435 to 451. If effective discussion supplements careful writing, the students will develop a considerable grasp of the principles of short story composition.

The project work outlined in the above plan should provide the bulk of a semester's activity in composition. In any class that has collaborated in writing a story where every step is carefully planned, and each partial result tested in the light of the students' knowledge of definite principles, the members will have received a practical introduction to short story writing. In subsequent semesters individual students may be encouraged to write stories by themselves or in collaboration with one or two other students. And if the school newspaper or magazine will print such work whenever it reaches a necessary degree of excellence, not only will the possibility of publication provide an

incentive to individual effort on the part of those who have taken the short story course, but the quality of the fiction which the school shows to the world should noticeably improve.

Nothing has been said about the way to originate themes. But the boy or girl who has studied worth while stories in class, and, under proper guidance, worked up an effective theme into story form, will have developed some feeling for theme values in the life that he sees about him and in the news columns of the daily press.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SHORT STORY IN AMERICA

Note: Representative stories by the authors treated in this chapter are named in the Reading Lists that follow it.

THE well written short story, as we know it today, has certain general features that mark it as a distinct type of fiction. For one thing, it is highly unified: action, characterization, background and emotional tone are shaped toward a single sharply stressed climax. Secondly, the story is true to life; this is to say that the material of the well written short story is life-like—not that the story represents life photographically. It should be noted, besides, that the writing is direct and without any taint of bookishness.

These general features have been slowly developed in the course of more than a century. Certain other features have been stressed at various stages of this development; but as we look back over the evolution of the short story, we see it progressing consistently toward the attainment of what we have called its general features.

The short story in English may fairly be considered an American type of fiction, because it has been evolved for the most part by Americans, and because most of the best short stories written in English have been written by Americans. This chapter is concerned only with the development of the short story in America, but the short story in America is virtually the short story written in English.

Roughly speaking, the year 1800 marked the end of the period of English literature known as the Classic Age. During this period writers were chiefly concerned with subjects bearing upon manners and morals; and it is to be noted that they regarded literary form—style and structure—as highly important. Previously to 1800, the short fiction produced in America can not be called short story writing in

While writing this chapter, the Editor has consulted Professor Fred Lewis Pattee's *The Development of the American Short Story,* and Professor Henry Seidel Canby's *The Short Story in English.*

the modern sense of the term. It consisted of sketches and tales written with a moral or instructive purpose, and though it might deal with characters and action, it did so only as a means for pointing morals and treating questions of customs and manners.

But about 1800 came a change in literary tastes. People turned from a regard for moral preachments and discussions of manners, to an interest in the supernatural, the heroic, the marvelous, and the sentimental. This was in the nature of a revolt against the narrow conventionalism of thought and interest that had marked the Classic Age, and the revolt included a reaction against the older regard for style and structure. The new spirit was known as romanticism, and we speak of the period beginning with 1800 as the Romantic Age. The change from the classic to the romantic attitude was in the main a highly desirable one, but like all revolts it had its excesses.

In America, as in England, fiction became devoted to extravagant tales of horror, of heroic adventure, of hopeless love, and of supernatural manifestations. Style was largely thrown to the winds, and a riot of formlessness marked the writing of the time. The short fiction was hardly more deserving of the term *short story* than had been the moral tales and sketches of the earlier period. For the short story (as we know it) must have form, and its material must be life—not uncontrolled imagination.

Until 1819 nothing that we can call a short story was produced in America. Then Washington Irving (1783-1859) published his *Sketch Book,* and America's first short stories had come into being.

Irving was the first to give distinct form to the short story. To be sure, the form in Irving's tales is not that of the modern short story: he had definite plot designs, but his work lacked the strongly marked unity that produces the stressed climax of today. Irving was also the first short fiction writer of his time who took his material from life. He did not picture life photographically, as the realists do, for his characters and incidents were imaginary. But all of his people *might* easily have lived, and they *might* easily have done what he has them do in his stories. The other writers of the time never tested their characters and incidents by the touchstone of truth.

There are three reasons why Irving could write short stories that were to stand the test of time, when such stories were not in the mode. In the first place, Washington Irving was a literary genius. Then

there was the matter of his early reading of the eighteenth century authors. These were the great English writers of the Classic Age—men like Samuel Johnson and Joseph Addison, who were noted stylists. Their influence gave Irving a strong bent for style and structure. He was a romanticist in his ideas; but because he was a classicist in his method, his short fiction had definite form. A third reason for Irving's achievement lies in his humor and emotional serenity. This enabled him to keep his romantic material from the extravagances in which most of the other American writers of short fiction up to 1860 indulged.

We read Irving's best stories today, despite their extreme leisureness and the importance that description has in them at the expense of rapid action or dramatic situation. But we enjoy them most for their genial humor and for the style in which they are written. Irving's style is not that of today, for it was cast in the mold of the eighteenth century essayists; but it is remarkably easy and graceful, and it has a pleasing old-time flavor.

Between 1819 and 1830 only Irving wrote stories that we accept as short stories today. But in 1830 two other great short story writers began to publish their work. These were Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849) and Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864). They continued to write short stories until 1849, when Poe died and Hawthorne began to turn to novel writing.

Because he was a literary artist, Poe saw clearly that the short story is something more than an abbreviated long story, and that it needs a structure of its own. He worked out a form that in its essential character has ever since been the form of well written short stories. This was the highly unified development of the story to a climax. To be sure, Poe's climax was one of total effect rather than of incident; but it is climax, nevertheless. He calculated the matter of suspense so that every element in the story definitely contributed to the crescendo of strong feeling with which his best stories ended.

But though Poe was greater than Irving in short story artistry, he lacked Irving's humor and emotional tranquillity. It was only his literary sensitiveness that kept Poe from the extravagances of most of the men and women who wrote short stories before 1860. His imagination was powerful and morbid, but his art kept it within bounds.

Poe made a second great contribution to the field of the short story: he was the first to write the modern detective story. Others had written

tales dealing with the solution of crime; but Poe was the first to develop the inductive method of the modern detective story. He would give the reader all the evidence in the case, yet keep him from solving the problem involved; then at the end he would present the carefully reasoned solution. Practically every later writer of mystery stories has used some phase of Poe's inductive method of unraveling crime problems or reading cryptic writings. A. Conan Doyle has freely acknowledged Sherlock Holmes's indebtedness to Poe.

Poe's best stories are read today. They are vivid, compact, and carefully planned for cumulative effect. Though his style lacks the directness of modern expression, it is always crystal clear and often sonorous. The stories have weaknesses: they lack humor, the themes are extravagant or morbid, and the character drawing is without proper definiteness; but their artistry gives them an effectiveness that makes them interesting after the almost hundred years since they were written.

Hawthorne was the third great short story writer in America. His contribution was a double one.

In the first place, he added a feature to the structure, for he was the first to write stories based upon a *situation*. He would select some relationship or circumstance with vivid or dramatic features, and express it in narrative form. His stories had climax, but the climax was regularly the outcome of the situation presented in the story.

The second thing to note about Hawthorne's relation to the short story, concerns the story substance or material. His situations embodied spiritual or moral questions. Because of this, when the short story left Hawthorne's hands, it had a higher moral tone than ever before. Hawthorne was a romanticist, but because of his concern with essentials of character he avoided the extravagances commonly found in the romantic writers of the period.

Hawthorne is one of the great stylists of American literature. His style is powerful, but always clear and melodious. His stories are much admired today by people of literary taste, and though this admiration is partly for their style, it is more largely for the double element he added to the short story—the use of situations embodying spiritual or moral problems. Hawthorne's characters, like Poe's, are not often individualized. Neither man could draw people as well as Irving could.

Poe and Hawthorne gave the short story much of the form that it has today—the highly unified development to a strong climax, and the

use of situation as a basis for the story. Effective character portrayal, absent since Irving, was yet to be revived; effective use of setting remained to be evolved; and realism was still to exercise its influence upon characters, action, and background.

We have to wait until about 1860 for any of these developments. And not only is this the case, but we find that Irving, Poe, and Hawthorne exerted comparatively little influence on the mass of short story writing before 1860. Their work was too far above the average of the time to be fully appreciated or widely imitated while they lived, and of the three only Irving was popular among his contemporaries.

The stories of these three men stand out, indeed, like mountain peaks above the low level of general achievement. Countless stories were written in America; but they lacked good short story form, and their substance reflected the sentimentality, the love of the marvelous, and the craving for melodramatic romance that continued to mark the period. Three other writers deserve mention, however, though none of them can be regarded as a first-class literary artist. They are Nathaniel Parker Willis, Fitz-James O'Brien, and Edward Everett Hale.

N. P. Willis (1806-1867), a New Englander, whose literary career centered in New York, was the most popular short story writer during the time that the far greater Poe and Hawthorne were writing. But he was popular merely because he gave the public the poor stuff that it wanted. He seems never to have realized that the short story had a form of its own and was not simply an abbreviation of the novel.

Fitz-James O'Brien (1828-1862) was a brilliant Irishman, who came to New York, and died as a soldier in the Civil War. He wrote much better stories than Willis did, because he consciously imitated Poe. His stories, indeed, have definite form. The best of them deal with the supernatural. But though he had real talent, O'Brien was too much of an imitator for us to assign him high literary rank.

The reputation of Edward Everett Hale (1822-1909) as a short story writer, rests almost entirely upon his *The Man without a Country*. This is a story of situation, loosely constructed, but powerful in its emotional effect.

From 1800 to 1860 the American short story writers were romanticists. But soon after *The Atlantic Monthly* was founded in 1857 with

James Russell Lowell as editor, a note of realism was struck. Professor Fred Lewis Pattee, in his *The Development of the American Short Story,* says, "With the advent of *The Atlantic Monthly* a healthy realism for the first time decisively entered American fiction. . . . Under Lowell's guidance there entered . . . a new young school of writers who threw overboard the old romanticism and introduced the world of Dickens at the opposite extreme." Of these writers Rebecca Harding Davis, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Elizabeth Stuart Phelps were prominent, but the largest amount of original work was done by Rose Terry Cooke (1827-1892), who wrote realistically of farm and small town life.

The American short story had now been broadened in its subject matter, for it had come to deal with every-day life. With its realism came a greater clearness in character portrayal, and a stressing of an element not before emphasized—the setting. Realistic stories had perforce to picture definite backgrounds, and realistic characters had necessarily to be drawn from living models.

Francis Bret Harte (1839-1902), better known as Bret Harte, is the fourth outstanding figure in the development of the short story in America. He wrote vividly of California life in the colorful days of the gold rush. He combined situation with strong climax, but this is not his chief claim to fame. He was the first great local colorist. That is, he featured picturesque characters and manners and background for the sake of their picturesqueness. He did even more than develop the use of local color and combine situation with climax, for he made vivid use of contrasts. His characters mingle good and bad traits in a striking way, and this contrast adds much to the surface effectiveness of his stories. Yet it is a source of weakness, for he strains his contrasts beyond probability.

Harte's California stories were immensely popular when they first appeared, in 1870. But we consider them exaggerated, sentimental, and even sensational. He was a journalist, and he wrote short stories in a good journalistic manner; but his was not great art, because it was lacking in sincerity.

The element of realism and the use of local color were to be further developed, and a new element—the use of humorous situation—was to be introduced, before the short story reached the 'nineties.

The realism of the early *Atlantic Monthly* writers had been somewhat crude. Henry James (1843-1916) and William Dean Howells (1837-1919), in the words of Professor Pattee, "purged it [the short story] of the coarseness that had been given it by the pioneer realists . . . and they made it obedient to Truth, but always with a realism chastened and held firmly in leash." It is as novelists, rather than as short story writers, that these two men are best known, and as a matter of fact Howells wrote very few short stories. They certainly influenced the short story, but more through their general effect upon American literature as a whole, than through their own short fiction. Professor Pattee adds, "They stood for workmanship at any cost, for style, for artistry over all. With them began the age of criticism, the age of literature as a deliberate science, of literature as a conscious art."

Thomas Bailey Aldrich (1836-1907), Frank R. Stockton (1834-1902), and H. C. Bunner (1855-1896) developed the story of humorous situation. Aldrich's best story of this type, *Marjorie Daw,* was published in 1873, but he continued for nearly twenty years to write occasional stories. Stockton did the bulk of his work in the 'eighties, and Bunner in the 'nineties. The stories of all three men show artistic workmanship. The climax is carefully worked up, and the end is often a surprise.

During the 'eighties the influence of Bret Harte was strongly felt, and the short stories written during this decade were largely stories of local color. This means that in most of the stories the setting (speech, manners and customs, and background) was prominent. The work of some of the local colorists, indeed, was practically nothing but local color spread thickly upon very slight story substance. Such a writer was "Charles Egbert Craddock"—Mary Noailles Murfree—(1850-1922), whose local color was that of the Tennessee mountains. George W. Cable (1844—) had more story texture under the local color of his stories of Creole life in Louisiana. Thomas Nelson Page (1853-1922), who wrote delightfully of the Southern aristocracy, was a local colorist first, and a story teller second; but his *Marse Chan* is a great short story. The *Uncle Remus* stories of Joel Chandler Harris (1848-1908) are much more than dialect stories, for they truly reflect the essential elements of the plantation negro's life. Sarah Orne Jewett (1849-1909) was not a local colorist, but because she wrote stories of one locality (the Maine coast), she is usually grouped with those who were. Her writing covered the period from 1873 to 1898.

In the 'nineties the short story recovered from the excessive use of local color that had marked it during the previous decade. Among many others Mary E. Wilkins Freeman (1862—), James Lane Allen (1850-1925), Hamlin Garland (1860—), Margaret Deland (1857—), Alice Brown (1857—), and Edith Wharton (1862—), wrote stories where action, characterization, and setting were well proportioned. In their stories, climax and situation resumed their proper importance, and realism and local color became judiciously mingled ingredients. Their work has the value, too, that worth-while themes and an admirable literary quality can add.

But another note was sounded in the 'nineties and sustained well into the new century. This was the note of journalistic effectiveness. It was sounded by an Englishman, Rudyard Kipling, and it was sustained by him and by his many followers. Kipling wrote crisply, with a directness and an objectiveness that made his stories something like Harte's; but where Harte had been sentimental and theatric, Kipling was not. The effort to be striking is sometimes apparent in Kipling's work; but his imagination, his keen powers of observation, and his genius for selecting vivid details give his stories real power. Kipling's work has been classified as realistic impressionism, yet Kipling is as much of a romanticist as a realist: he takes his material directly from life, but he sees it imaginatively. In America, Richard Harding Davis (1864-1916), Stephen Crane (1871-1900), Owen Wister (1860—), Frank Norris (1870-1902), and Jack London (1876-1916), all showed the influence of Kipling.

O. Henry * is the last of the five American figures that stand out most prominently in the development of the short story. He has been likened to Poe. Both were journalists who developed an effective short story technique, and both had an unusual mastery of style. Poe was the sincerer artist, however. He added journalistic qualities to the short story, but only to heighten its effectiveness; O. Henry frankly reduced the short story to journalistic fiction. In his better moments, O. Henry wrote so as to challenge our admiration; at his worst, he jazzed the short story. He evolved what may be called a clever story-formula, that he used so as to produce a tremendously popular story of the short short-story type.

The formula seems to be this: As the basis of the story, take a humor-

* See the biography on page 36.

ous situation, and exaggerate its humor as you wish; construct an extremely short and "snappy" beginning; then develop the situation rapidly through a series of high voltage humorous details of action and dialogue —all more or less exaggerated—to a humorous climax that is preferably a surprise; end the story at the climax or very shortly after, and end it with a snap. The characteristic O. Henry story follows such a formula, and O. Henry often adds another element: he will chat informally with his readers, "kidding them along" as a shell-game man does his audience, and when the surprise ending comes they will find that the pea isn't where they thought it was.

This sort of thing is entertaining and amazingly clever. But it is not high art, because it is not wholly sincere and lacks depth of thought and feeling. When O. Henry mingled pathos or dignity with his humor, and kept exaggeration at a minimum, his stories have depth and considerable sincerity; examples are *The Gift of the Magi, The Whirligig of Life, A Municipal Report, A Retrieved Reformation, Georgia's Ruling,* and *The Last Leaf.* When the humorous exaggeration is extreme, as in *The Gentle Grafter* stories, O. Henry's work is only mildly entertaining and only passably clever.

O. Henry's influence upon the short story has been very great. He became popular at once, because the short humorous stories of the Southwest, by which he introduced himself to the public, were pleasingly new in matter and manner. Among readers, one taste of the O. Henry type of story provoked another, and soon thousands of Americans were not to be satisfied with short stories that did not have the humor, the cleverness, and the "pep" that marked his work.

As we look back at the work of the early 'nineties, we can see that the short story had by that time grown up and become adult. The exaggerations of its formative period had been discarded, and the story showed a proper balancing of its elements along with the achievement of definite form.

Yet the typical story of the 'nineties is less direct and vivid, both in matter and in form, than the typical story of the present. The change is largely due to the influence of Kipling and O. Henry. Both men were journalists, and journalistic writing stresses directness and vividness. Kipling emphasized striking realistic details and dramatic situations. O. Henry emphasized humorous situations and humorous details. Kipling,

for the most part, refrained from exaggeration, but O. Henry (except in his best stories) did not.

At its best, the short story since 1910 (the period covered by this collection) has all the careful workmanship, right proportion, and truth to life that marked the story of the 'nineties, and in addition it has the directness and vividness that Kipling and O. Henry brought to the writing of short fiction. At its worst, the story since 1910 strives for effectiveness through frank exaggeration which violates truth. In consequence, it is a poorer thing than the story of the 'nineties, though it has much more humor, cleverness, and snap.

Because of this difference in type, we must definitely divide short stories of the present day into two classes. "Best" and "worst" are unsatisfactory terms, partly because they are indefinite, and partly because they properly apply only to stories at the two extremes of merit. A much more workable classification would seem to be that of the *Commercialized Story,* which violates truth to life for the sake of "punch" and striking effects, and the *Artistic Story*—the story written with a genuine devotion to art—which uses life-like material truthfully because art requires truth.

The commercialized story is written by those who seek simply to give the largest possible number of readers the kind of fiction that those readers want. This is the type of story in which the influence of O. Henry is strongest. Stories of this kind may have much or little of the attractiveness that O. Henry's work had, but they have most of its faults. They constitute the bulk of the short fiction in the popular weeklies. Of such stories Professor Pattee writes: "The colors are vivid and startlingly splashed, the humor is broad, the characters stand out like caricatures. Everything is keyed for the Main Street multitude . . . whose ideals of art are satisfied by the moving pictures. The primary object is entertainment, gross entertainment—laughter, sensation, the exhilaration of success won through difficulties, eternal newness, adventure, the thrill of movement, always movement. To quote the New York *Nation,* 'Our short stories move rapidly, but it is a form of speed that is confined within the limits of each paragraph. Every sentence must have "go" in it and stimulate the desire for the next sentence as an object in itself, and only secondarily because it brings us nearer to the end of the anecdote.' "

New elements are being tried from time to time by writers of the

commercialized story who think they have discovered a quality that will give them greater vogue than the hundreds of other writers with whom they are in competition. But such new elements for the most part have little to do with real art.

The other type of story is of course also written to sell. But it is written by men and women who would rather not write at all than violate their ideals of art. Fortunately, the higher class magazines encourage the artistic short story. It is work of this better kind that is printed in the present collection. To readers of taste, the artistically written story holds the attention every bit as strongly as the commercialized one, for it deals vividly with dramatic material. Such work is rooted honestly in life—life that is vibrant and colorful—and readers of taste find in it a stimulating challenge to their powers of thought and feeling.

SHORT STORY READING LISTS

THE following lists are meant to constitute a practical Short Story Guide. The American Short Story is represented from 1819 to 1929, and the British Short Story from 1860 to 1929. The Editor's aim has been to include the great majority of American short story writers whose reputations warrant their inclusion, and such British writers of prominence as are most likely to be represented on the shelves of the average American public library.

Whether it originally appeared in a magazine or in a collection, every story listed is now available in a *book,* and the title of the book is given in each case. This rule has been followed in order to make the list a practical one, for back numbers of magazines are seldom kept in the average library. In no case is a book named for which a fairly recent edition is not available.

The attempt has been made to choose stories representative of an author's best work; but some notable stories have had to be omitted because they have never appeared in book form. Many promising young writers of the immediate present have not yet achieved the distinction of a volume of collected stories, and so could be listed only as their stories have been represented in such collections as the annual O. Henry Memorial Prize Story and O'Brien Best Story collections.

The division into periods should help the student to find readily what he may at any time be looking for. Naturally the division cannot be wholly satisfactory. Where some of the work of an author has appeared in one period and some in another, the author is listed in the period in which the bulk of his work appeared, or in which, in the Editor's judgment, his most characteristic work was done. O. Henry has been listed in the last group because, though he died in its first year, he influenced the period more than any one else has done, and practically belonged in the period for some years before it began.

In the preparation of the lists the Editor has consulted Ina Ten Eyck Firkins's *Index to Short Stories,* published in 1923, and the card catalogue of the New York Public Library.

Titles of stories are printed in roman and titles of books are printed in *italics*. Every book is a collection of stories by the author for whom it is listed, unless the book is followed by an editor's name or is one of the O. Henry Prize Story volumes.

The abbreviations are few: "ed." means "Edited by"; *"ibid."* (*ibidem*, ĭ-bīd'-ĕm, = *in the same place*) indicates that a story is to be found in the same volume or volumes in which the preceding story appears.

1819 to 1860

AUSTIN, WILLIAM (1778-1841)

PETER RUGG, THE MISSING MAN, in *American Short Stories*, ed. C. S. Baldwin; *Century Readings in the American Short Story*, ed. F. L. Pattee

HALE, EDWARD EVERETT (1822-1909)

THE MAN WITHOUT A COUNTRY, in *The Man without a Country; Best American Short Stories*, ed. W. P. Trent; *Little Masterpieces of Fiction*, ed. H. W. Mabie

MY DOUBLE AND HOW HE UNDID ME, in *The Man without a Country; If, Yes, and Perhaps; Types of the Short Story*, ed. B. A. Heydrick

HAWTHORNE, NATHANIEL (1804-1864)

THE AMBITIOUS GUEST, in *Twice Told Tales*

THE BIRTHMARK, in *Mosses from an Old Manse*

THE CHIMERA, in *A Wonder Book*

CIRCE'S PALACE, in *Tanglewood Tales*

DR. HEIDEGGER'S EXPERIMENT, in *Twice Told Tales*

ETHAN BRAND, in *The Snow Image*

THE GOLDEN TOUCH, in *A Wonder Book*

THE GORGON'S HEAD, *ibid.*

THE GRAY CHAMPION, in *Twice Told Tales*

THE GREAT STONE FACE, in *The Snow Image*

MY KINSMAN, MAJOR MOLINEUX, in *The Snow Image*

THE PROPHETIC PICTURES, in *Twice Told Tales*

RAPPACCINI'S DAUGHTER, in *Mosses from an Old Manse*

THE SNOW IMAGE, in *The Snow Image*

THE WHITE OLD MAID, in *Twice Told Tales*

IRVING, WASHINGTON (1783-1859)

THE ADVENTURE OF THE BLACK FISHERMAN, in *Tales of a Traveller*

THE DEVIL AND TOM WALKER, *ibid.*

DOLPH HEYLIGER, in *Bracebridge Hall*

THE LEGEND OF THE ARABIAN ASTROLOGER, in *The Alhambra*

THE LEGEND OF THE MOOR'S LEGACY, *ibid.*

THE LEGEND OF SLEEPY HOLLOW, in *The Sketch Book*

RIP VAN WINKLE, *ibid.*

THE SPECTRE BRIDEGROOM, *ibid.*

THE STUDENT OF SALAMANCA, in *Bracebridge Hall*

MELVILLE, HERMAN (1819-1891)
THE TOWN-HO'S STORY, in *American Short Stories,* ed. A. Jessup

O'BRIEN, FITZ-JAMES (1828-1862)
THE DIAMOND LENS, in *The Diamond Lens; The Poems and Stories of Fitz-James O'Brien,* ed. William Winter
WHAT WAS IT? A MYSTERY, *ibid.; American Short Stories,* ed. C. S. Baldwin
THE WONDERSMITH, in *The Diamond Lens; The Poems and Stories of Fitz-James O'Brien,* ed. William Winter

POE, EDGAR ALLAN (1809-1849)
THE ASSIGNATION, in *Selected Tales,* ed. H. W. Mabie
THE BLACK CAT, *ibid.; Little Masterpieces: Poe,* ed. B. Perry
THE CASK OF AMONTILLADO, *ibid.*
THE DESCENT INTO THE MAELSTROM, in *Selected Tales,* ed. H. W. Mabie; *Best American Tales,* ed. W. P. Trent
THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER, in *Selected Tales,* ed. H. W. Mabie; *American Short Stories,* ed. C. S. Baldwin
THE GOLD BUG, in *Selected Tales,* ed. H. W. Mabie; H. S. Canby, *Study of the Short Story*
LIGEIA, in *Poe's Tales,* ed. M. A. Eaton
THE MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH, in *Selected Tales,* ed. H. W. Mabie; *Poe's Tales,* ed. M. A. Eaton
THE MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE, in *Selected Tales,* ed. H. W. Mabie; *Little Masterpieces of Fiction,* ed. H. W. Mabie
THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM, *ibid.; Types of the Short Story,* ed. B. A. Heydrick
THE PURLOINED LETTER, in *Selected Tales,* ed. H. W. Mabie; *Poe's Tales,* ed. M. A. Eaton

SIMMS, WILLIAM GILMORE (1806-1870)
THOSE OLD LUNES! OR, WHICH IS THE MADMAN? in *American Short Stories,* ed. A. Jessup
GRAYLING; OR, "MURDER WILL OUT," in *Century Readings in the American Short Story,* ed. F. L. Pattee

TAYLOR, BAYARD (1825-1878)
WHO WAS SHE? in *American Short Stories,* ed. C. S. Baldwin

WILLIS, NATHANIEL PARKER (1806-1867)
THE INLET OF PEACH BLOSSOMS, in *American Short Stories,* ed. C. S. Baldwin
LADY RAVELGOLD, in *The Romance of Travel*
OONDER HOOFDEN, *ibid.*
PALETTO'S BRIDE, *ibid.*

1860 to 1890

ALDRICH, THOMAS BAILEY (1836-1907)
GOLIATH, in *Two Bites at a Cherry*
MADEMOISELLE OLYMPE ZABRISKIE, in *Marjorie Daw and Other Stories; Great Modern American Stories,* ed. W. D. Howells
MARJORIE DAW, in *Marjorie Daw and Other Stories*
PÈRE ANTOINE'S DATE-PALM, *ibid.*
QUITE SO, *ibid.*
TWO BITES AT A CHERRY, in *Two Bites at a Cherry*

THE WHITE FEATHER, in *A Sea Turn and Other Matters*

CABLE, GEORGE WASHINGTON (1844-1925)
JEAN-AH POQUELIN, in *Old Creole Days*
MADAME DELPHINE, in *Madame Delphine*
"POSSON JONE," in *Old Creole Days; American Short Stories,* ed. A. Jessup
'SIEUR GEORGE, in *Old Creole Days*
THE SOLITARY, in *Strong Hearts*
'TITE POULETTE, in *Old Creole Days*

COOKE, ROSE TERRY (1827-1892)
FREEDOM WHEELER'S CONTROVERSY WITH PROVIDENCE, in *Somebody's Neighbors; Century Readings in the American Short Story,* ed. F. S. Pattee
MISS BEULAH'S BONNET, in *Somebody's Neighbors; Children's Hour,* ed. E. M. Tappan
AN OLD-FASHIONED THANKSGIVING, in *Huckleberries Gathered from New England Hills*
TOO LATE, in *American Short Stories,* ed. A. Jessup

CRADDOCK, CHARLES EGBERT (MARY NOAILLES MURFREE) 1850-1922
THE DANCIN' PARTY AT HARRISON'S COVE, in *In the Tennessee Mountains*
THE "HARNT" THAT WALKS CHILHOWEE, *ibid.*
HIS CHRISTMAS MIRACLE, in *The Raid of the Guerilla, and Other Stories*
THE STAR IN THE VALLEY, in *In the Tennessee Mountains; American Short Stories,* ed. A. Jessup
TAKING THE BLUE RIBBON AT THE COUNTY FAIR, in *The Mystery of Witchface Mountain*

DAVIS, REBECCA HARDING (1831-1910)
A FADED LEAF OF HISTORY, in *Silhouettes of American Life; Little Classics,* ed. R. Johnson
LIFE IN THE IRON MILLS, in *Century Readings in the American Short Story,* ed. F. L. Pattee

FIELD, EUGENE (1850-1895)
BILL, THE LOKIL EDITOR, in *A Little Book of Profitable Tales*
LITTLE YALLER BABY, *ibid.*
THE MOUSE AND THE MOONBEAM, *ibid.*

HALE, EDWARD EVERETT (See the 1819-1860 list.)

HARDY, THOMAS (1840-1928)
AN IMAGINATIVE WOMAN, in *Wessex Tales*
INTERLOPERS AT THE KNAP, *ibid.*
THE THREE STRANGERS, *ibid.*
THE WITHERED ARM, *ibid.*

HARRIS, JOEL CHANDLER (1848-1908)
BROTHER RABBIT'S BEAR HUNT, in *Uncle Remus Returns*
THE KING THAT TALKED BIGGITY, in *Uncle Remus and His Friends*
TROUBLE ON LOST MOUNTAIN, in *American Short Stories,* ed. A. Jessup
THE WONDERFUL TAR-BABY STORY, in *Uncle Remus, His Songs and His Sayings*

HARTE, BRET (FRANCIS BRET HARTE) 1839-1902
COLONEL STARBOTTLE FOR THE PLAINTIFF, in *Openings in the Old Trail; Best American Humorous Stories,* ed. A. Jessup
HOW SANTA CLAUS CAME TO SIMPSON'S BAR, in *The Luck of Roaring*

Camp and Other Stories; Mrs. Skagg's Husbands

AN INGÉNUE OF THE SIERRAS, in *A Protégée of Jack Hamlin's; American Short Stories,* ed. A. Jessup

THE LUCK OF ROARING CAMP, in *The Luck of Roaring Camp and Other Stories*

M'LISS: AN IDYL OF RED MOUNTAIN, *ibid.*

THE OUTCASTS OF POKER FLAT, in *The Luck of Roaring Camp and Other Stories; American Short Stories,* ed. A. Jessup; *American Short Stories,* ed. C. S. Baldwin

ROMANCE OF MADRONO HILLS, in *The Luck of Roaring Camp and Other Stories; Mrs. Skagg's Husbands*

TENNESSEE'S PARTNER, in *The Luck of Roaring Camp and Other Stories*

HAWTHORNE, JULIAN (1846-)

A MODEL MURDER, in *Mr. Dunton's Invention and Other Stories*

MR. DUNTON'S INVENTION, *ibid.*

HOWELLS, WILLIAM DEAN (1837-1919)

THE ANGEL OF THE LORD, in *Questionable Shapes*

A DIFFICULT CASE, in *A Pair of Patient Lovers*

THE EIDOLONS OF BROOKS ALFORD, in *Between the Dark and the Daylight*

A SLEEP AND A FORGETTING, *ibid.*

THOUGH ONE ROSE FROM THE DEAD, in *Questionable Shapes; American Short Stories,* ed. A. Jessup

JAMES, HENRY (1843-1916)

THE BIRTHPLACE, in *The Better Sort; Novels and Tales, vol. 17*

BROKEN WINGS, in *The Better Sort; Novels and Tales, vol. 16*

BROOKSMITH, in *The Lesson of the Master; Novels and Tales, vol. 18*

A DAY OF DAYS, in *The Landscape Painter; Century Readings in the American Short Story,* ed. F. L. Pattee

THE FIGURE IN THE CARPET, in *Embarrassment; Novels and Tales, vol. 15; American Short Stories,* ed. A. Jessup

JULIA BRIDE, in *Julia Bride; Novels and Tales, vol. 17*

THE REAL THING, in *The Real Thing and Other Tales; Novels and Tales, vol. 18*

THE TURN OF THE SCREW, in *Two Magics; Novels and Tales, vol. 12*

JOHNSTON, RICHARD MALCOLM (1822-1898)

THE HOTEL EXPERIENCE OF MR. PINK FLUKER, in *Best American Humorous Short Stories,* ed. A. Jessup

JEWETT, SARAH ORNE (1849-1909)

AUNT CYNTHY DALLETT, in *The Queen's Twin and Other Stories; Stories and Tales, vol. 4*

THE DULHAM LADIES, in *Tales of New England; A White Heron and Other Stories; Stories and Tales, vol. 2*

THE LIFE OF NANCY, in *The Life of Nancy; Stories and Tales, vol. 5*

MISS TEMPE'S WATCHERS, in *Tales of New England; Stories and Tales, vol. 2*

A WHITE HERON, in *A White Heron and Other Stories; Stories and Tales, vol. 2*

A WINTER COURTSHIP, in *Strangers and Wayfarers; Stories and Tales, vol. 5*

PAGE, THOMAS NELSON, (1853-1922)

THE OLD GENTLEMAN OF THE BLACK STOCK, in *The Old Gentleman of the Black Stock*

MARSE CHAN, in *In Ole Virginia*
MEH LADY, *ibid.*
"NO HAID PAWN," *ibid.*
OLD JABE'S MARITAL EXPERIENCES, in *Bred in the Bone*
OLE 'STRACTED, in *In Ole Virginia; American Short Stories,* ed. A. Jessup
THE SPECTRE IN THE CART, in *Bred in the Bone*

PHELPS, ELIZABETH STUART (MRS. H. D. WARD), 1844-1911
HIS SOUL TO KEEP, in *The Oath of Allegiance, and Other Stories*
THE LADY OF SHALLOT, in *Sealed Orders*
SINCE I DIED, *ibid.*

RIVES, AMÉLIE (PRINCESS TROUBETZKOY), 1863-
A BROTHER TO DRAGONS, in *A Brother to Dragons, and Other Old-Time Tales*

SPOFFORD, HARRIET PRESCOTT (1835-1891)
THE BEST-LAID SCHEMES, in *A Scarlet Poppy*
CIRCUMSTANCE, in *The Amber Gods, and Other Stories; Century Readings in the American Short Story,* ed. F. L. Pattee
THE COLONEL'S CHRISTMAS, in *Old Washington*
IN A CELLAR, in *The Amber Gods and Other Stories; American Short Stories,* ed. A. Jessup

STEVENSON, ROBERT LOUIS (1850-1894)
THE BEACH OF FALESA, in *Island Nights' Entertainments*
THE BOTTLE IMP, *ibid.*
A LODGING FOR THE NIGHT, in *New Arabian Nights*
MARKHEIM, in *The Merry Men*
THE SIRE DE MALETROIT'S DOOR, in *New Arabian Nights*
THRAWN JANET, in *The Merry Men*
THE TREASURE OF FRANCHARD, *ibid.*
WILL O' THE MILL, *ibid.*

STOCKTON, FRANK RICHARD (1834-1902)
THE BEE-MAN OF ORNE, in *The Bee-Man of Orne; The Queen's Museum*
THE LADY OR THE TIGER? in *The Lady or the Tiger? A Chosen Few; Century Readings in the American Short Story,* ed. F. L. Pattee
THE REMARKABLE WRECK OF THE "THOMAS HYKE," in *A Chosen Few*
A TALE OF NEGATIVE GRAVITY, in *A Chosen Few*
THE TRANSFERRED GHOST, in *A Chosen Few; The Lady or the Tiger? American Short Stories,* ed. A. Jessup

STOWE, HARRIET BEECHER (1812-1896)
COLONEL EPH'S SHOE-BUCKLES, in *Sam Lawson's Oldtown Fireside Stories*
THE GHOST IN CAP'N BROWN'S HOUSE, *ibid.*
MIS' ELDERKIN'S PITCHER, *ibid.*

TWAIN, MARK (SAMUEL LANGHORNE CLEMENS), 1835-1910
THE JUMPING FROG OF CALAVERAS COUNTY, in *Sketches Old and New*
THE MAN THAT CORRUPTED HADLEYBURG, in *The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg, and Other Stories*
A MEDIÆVAL ROMANCE, in *Sketches Old and New*

WOOLSON, CONSTANCE FENIMORE (1838-1894)
THE LADY OF LITTLE FISHING, in *Castle Nowhere; Century Readings*

in the American Short Story, ed. F. L. Pattee

THE SOUTH DEVIL, in *Rodman the Keeper; American Short Stories*, ed. A. Jessup

1890 to 1910

ALLEN, JAMES LANE (1849-1925)
FLUTE AND VIOLIN, in *Flute and Violin*
THE WHITE COWL, *ibid.*

AUSTIN, MARY HUNTER (1868-)
THE CROOKED FIR, in *The Basket Woman*
THE LAST ANTELOPE, in *Lost Borders*

BACON, JOSEPHINE DODGE (DASCAM), 1876-
EDGAR, THE CHOIR BOY UNCELESTIAL, in *The Madness of Philip*
THE LITTLE GOD AND DICKY, *ibid.*

BANGS, JOHN KENDRICK (1862-1922)
THE MYSTERY OF MY GRANDMOTHER'S HAIR SOFA, in *Ghosts I Have Met*
THE SPECTRE COOK OF BANGLETOP, in *The Water Ghost*

BARRIE, JAMES MATTHEW (1860-)
THE COURTING OF T'NOWHEAD'S BELL, in *Auld Licht Idyls*
CREE QUEERY AND MYSY DROLLY, *ibid.*
HOW GAVIN BIRSE PUT IT TO MAG LOWNIE, in *A Window in Thrums*
THE INCONSIDERATE WAITER, in *Two of Them*
LITTLE RATHIE'S "BURAL," in *Auld Licht Idyls*
TWO OF THEM, in *Two of Them*

BENSON, EDWARD FREDERIC (1867-)
DOUBLE OVERTIME, in *Double Overtime*
THE THING IN THE HALL, in *The Room in the Tower, and Other Stories*

BIERCE, AMBROSE (1842-1914)
KILLED AT RESACA, in *Collected Works, vol. 2*
AN OCCURRENCE AT OWL CREEK BRIDGE, in *Collected Works, vol. 2; American Short Stories*, ed. A. Jessup
ONE SUMMER NIGHT, in *Collected Works, vol. 3; Can Such Things Be?*

BROWN, ALICE (1857-)
THE AUCTION, in *Country Neighbors*
HEARTSEASE, in *Meadow Grass*
JOINT OWNERS IN SPAIN, *ibid.*
QUEENS OF ARCADY, in *Vanishing Points*
ROSY BALM, in *Country Roads*

BUNNER, HENRY CUYLER (1855-1896)
THE LOVE LETTERS OF SMITH, in *Short Sixes*
A SISTERLY SCHEME, *ibid.*
THE TENOR, *ibid.*
ZENOBIA'S INFIDELITY, *ibid.*

CATHERWOOD, MARY HARTWELL (1847-1902)
PONTIAC'S LOOKOUT, in *The Chase of Saint Castin*
SERENA, in *The Queen of the Swamps*
THE SKELETON ON ROUND ISLAND, in *Mackinac and Lake Stories*

CHAMBERS, ROBERT WILLIAM (1865-)
THE CARPET OF BELSHAZZAR, in *The Tree of Heaven*
THE TREE OF HEAVEN, *ibid.*
THE YELLOW SIGN, in *The King in Yellow*

CHESTER, GEORGE RANDOLPH (1869-1924)
BARGAIN DAY AT TUTT HOUSE, in *Best American Humorous Short Stories,* ed. A. Jessup
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CHOPIN, KATE (1851-1904)
ATHÉNAÏSE, in *A Night in Acadie*
AZÉLIE, *ibid.; American Short Stories,* ed. A. Jessup
DÉSIRÉE'S BABY, in *Bayou Folk*
MADAME CELESTIN'S DIVORCE, *ibid.; Century Readings in the American Short Story,* ed. F. L. Pattee

COLTON, ARTHUR WILLIS (1868-)
THE ELDERS' SEAT, in *The Delectable Mountains*
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CRANE, STEPHEN (1870-1900)
THE LITTLE REGIMENT, in *The Little Regiment, and Other Episodes of the Civil War*
THE OPEN BOAT, in *The Open Boat, and Other Tales of Adventure*
"SHOWIN' OFF," in *Whilomville Stories*
THIS MAJESTIC LIE, in *Wounds in the Rain*

CRAWFORD, F. MARION (1854-1909)
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CROCKETT, SAMUEL RUTHERFORD (1860-1914)
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CUTTING, MARY STEWART (1851-1924)
DANCE-MAD BILLY, in *Some of Us Are Married*
THE MEASURE, in *The Suburban Whirl*
MRS. ATWOOD'S OUTER RAIMENT, in *Little Stories of Married Life*

DAVIS, RICHARD HARDING (1864-1916)
THE EXILES, in *The Exiles, and Other Stories*
GALLEGHER: A NEWSPAPER STORY, in *Gallegher, and Other Stories*
"SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE," in *"Somewhere in France"*
VAN BIBBER AND THE SWAN-BOATS, in *Gallegher, and Other Stories*

DELAND, MARGARET WADE (1857-)
AT THE STUFFED-ANIMAL HOUSE, in *Dr. Lavendar's People*
GOOD FOR THE SOUL, in *Old Chester Tales*
THE HANDS OF ESAU, in *The Hands of Esau*
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THE WHITE FEATHER, in *R... J.'s Mother and Other People*

DONNELL, ANNIE (1862-)
THE HUNDRED AND ONETH, in *Rebecca Mary*
PROMISE, in *The Very Small Person*

DOYLE, ARTHUR CONAN (1859-)

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THE SPECKLED BAND, *ibid.*

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DUNBAR, PAUL LAURENCE (1872-1906)

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THE STRENGTH OF GIDEON, in *The Strength of Gideon*

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DUNCAN, NORMAN (1871-1916)

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LITTLE NIPPER O' HIDE-AND-SEEK HARBOUR, in *Harbour Tales Down North*

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EDWARDS, HARRY STILWELL (1855-1917)

ELDER BROWN'S BACKSLIDE, in *Two Runaways and Other Stories*

HIS DEFENSE, in *His Defense, and Other Stories*

FERNALD, CHESTER BAILEY (1869-)

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FORD, PAUL LEICESTER (1865-1902)

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FOX, JOHN (1862-1919)

CHRISTMAS EVE ON LONESOME, in *Christmas Eve on Lonesome, and Other Stories*

A CUMBERLAND VENDETTA, in *A Cumberland Vendetta, and Other Stories*

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FREDERIC, HAROLD (1856-1898)

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THE EVE OF THE FOURTH, in *In the Sixties; Marsena, and Other Stories*

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FREEMAN, MARY E. WILKINS (1862-)

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FRENCH, ANNE WARNER (1869-1913)

BESSIE'S MOTHER, in *An Original Gentleman*

HIMSELF REBORN, in *Your Child and Mine*

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GARLAND, HAMLIN (1860-)

AMONG THE CORN ROWS, in *Main-Travelled Roads*

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The Return of a Private, in *Main-Travelled Roads*
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GISSING, GEORGE ROBERT (1857-1903)
Fate and the Apothecary, in *House of Cobwebs*
Transplanted, in *Human Odds and Ends*

GRANT, ROBERT (1852-1914)
By Hook or Crook, in *The Bachelor's Christmas, and Other Stories*
An Exchange of Courtesies, in *The Law-Breakers and Other Stories*
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GREEN, ANNA KATHARINE (1846-)
A Difficult Problem, in *A Difficult Problem, and Other Stories*
A Mysterious Case, in *The Old Stone House, and Other Stories*
The Stair-case at the Heart's Delight, in *A Difficult Problem, and Other Stories*

GRENFELL, WILFRED THOMASON (1865-)
Gifts of Poverty, in *Tales of the Labrador*
Nancy, in *Labrador Days: Tales of the Sea Toilers*
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HARBEN, WILLIAM NATHANIEL (1858-1919)
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Jim Trundle's Crisis, *ibid.*

HARLAND, HENRY (1861-1905)
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Merely Players, in *Comedies and Errors*
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HARRISON, CONSTANCE CARY (MRS. BURTON HARRISON), 1846-1920
The Carcellini Emerald, in *The Carcellini Emerald*
On Frenchman's Bay, in *A Virginia Cousin: and Bar Harbor Tales*
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HAWKINS, ANTHONY HOPE (1863-)
The Device of Geraldo, the Painter, in *The Heart of the Princess Osra*
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HEARN, LAFCADIO (1850-1904)
The Dream of a Summer Day, in *Out of the East*
Haru, in *Kokoru*
Hórai, in *Kwaidan*
The Soul of the Great Bell, in *Some Chinese Ghosts*
The Story of Itō Norisuké, in *The Romance of the Milky Way*

HERRICK, ROBERT (1868-)
A Conscript Mother, in *A Conscript Mother*
Miss Atherton's Mission, in *Love's Dilemmas*

HEWLETT, MAURICE (1861-1923)
Dan Costard's Tale of Peridore and Paravail, in *New Canterbury Tales*
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HIBBARD, GEORGE ABIAH (1858-)
"As the Sparks Fly Upward," in *The Governor, and Other Stories*
Iduna, in *Iduna, and Other Stories*
"A Mad World, My Masters," in *Nowadays, and Other Stories*
The Woman in the Case, in *Iduna, and Other Stories*

HICHENS, ROBERT SMYTHE (1864-)
The Black Spaniel, in *The Black Spaniel, and Other Stories*
The Princess and the Jewel Doctor, *ibid.*
Tee-to-Tum, in *Bye-Ways*

HORNUNG, ERNEST WILLIAM (1866-1921)
The Moth and the Star, in *Stingaree*
Nine Points of the Law, in *An Amateur Cracksman*
The Ides of March, *ibid.*
No Sinecure, in *Raffles*

HUDSON, WILLIAM HENRY (1841-1922)
Niño Diablo, in *El Ombu; Tales of the Pampas*
Tecla and the Little Men, in *Tales of the Pampas*

JANVIER, THOMAS ALLIBONE (1849-1913)
Hart's Nephew's Hold-up, in *Santa Fé's Partner*
Niñita, in *Stories of Old New Spain*

KEATS, GWENDOLYN (pseud., ZACK), d. 1910
Benjamin Parrot's Fancy, in *Tales of Dunstable Weir*
The Red-Haired Man's Dream, in *Life Is Life*
Sisters, in *Tales of Dunstable Weir*

KELLY, MYRA (1876-1910)
The Etiquette of Yetta, in *Little Aliens*
A Soul above Buttons, in *Wards of Liberty*

KING, GRACE ELIZABETH (1852-)
Bonne Maman, in *Tales of Time and Place*
Mimi's Marriage, in *Balcony Stories*
Monsieur Motte, in *Monsieur Motte*

KIPLING, RUDYARD (1865-)
The Brushwood Boy, in *The Day's Work*
The Man Who Would be King, in *Under the Deodars*
Old Men at Pevensey, in *Puck of Pook's Hill*
On Greenhow Hill, in *Life's Handicap*
On the Great Wall, in *Puck of Pook's Hill*
Red Dog, in *The Second Jungle Book*
The Story of Mohammed Din, in *Plain Tales from the Hills*
Wee Willie Winkie, in *Under the Deodars*
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LE GALLIENNE, RICHARD (1866-)
King Florus and Fair Jehane, in *A Romance of Old France*
The Youth of Lady Constantia, in *Painted Shadows*

LEWIS, ALFRED HENRY (pseud., DAN QUIN), 1842-1914
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LONG, JOHN LUTHER (1861-1927)
"Dolce," in *The Prince of Illusion*
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LONDON, JACK (1876-1916)
The God of His Fathers, in *The God of His Fathers, and Other Stories*
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The Seed of McCoy, in *South Sea Tales*
The Sun-Dog Trail, in *Love of Life, and Other Stories*
To Build a Fire, in *The Lost Face*
The Whale Tooth, in *South Sea Tales*
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LOOMIS, CHARLES BATTELL (1861-1911)
Cyril and the Gnome, in *Yankee Enchantments*
The Minister's Henhouse, in *Cheerful Americans*
Tod and the Stolen Holidays, in *Yankee Enchantments*

McCUTCHEON, GEORGE BARR (1866-1928)
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No Questions Asked, in *Anderson Crow, Detective*
Shot with Crimson, in *Shot with Crimson*

MARSHALL, ARCHIBALD (1866-)
The Sèvres Vase, in *Terrors, and Other Stories*
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MATTHEWS, JAMES BRANDER (1852-)
The Dream Gown of the Japanese Ambassador, in *Tales of Fantasy and Fact*
The Rival Ghosts, *ibid.*
A Wall Street Wooing, in *Outlines in Local Color*

MITCHELL, SILAS WEIR (1830-1914)
The Fourteenth Guest, in *The Guillotine Club, and Other Stories*
Hephzibah Guinness, in *Hephzibah Guinness*
The Society of the Guillotine, in *The Guillotine Club, and Other Stories*

MORRISON, ARTHUR (1863-)
On the Stairs, in *Tales of Mean Streets*
Rhymer the Second, in *Modern Short Stories,* ed. M. Ashmun
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That Brute Simmons, in *Tales of Mean Streets*

NORRIS, FRANK (1870-1902)
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The Passing of Cock-eye Blacklock, *ibid.*
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OSBOURNE, LLOYD (1868-)
Father Zosimus, in *The Queen versus Billy*
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OUIDA (LOUISE DE LA RAMÉE), 1840-1898
A Dog of Flanders, in *A Dog of Flanders, and Other Stories*
Ruffino, in *Ruffino, and Other Stories*

PAGET, VIOLET (pseud., VERNON LEE), 1856-
POPE JACYNTH, in *Pope Jacynth, and Other Fantastic Tales*
PRINCE ALBERIC AND THE SNAKE LADY, *ibid.*

PARKER, SIR GILBERT (HORATIO GILBERT), 1862-
MATHURIN, A SINNER OF PONTIAC, in *The Lane That Had No Turning*
SHE OF THE TRIPLE CHEVRON, in *Pierre and His People*
SHON MCGANN'S TOBOGGAN RIDE, *ibid.*
THREE COMMANDMENTS IN THE VULGAR TONGUE, in *A Romany of the Snows*

PEATTIE, ELIA WILKINSON (1862-)
ASTRAL ONION, in *The Shape of Fear, and Other Ghostly Tales*
DIMINUENDO, in *Pippins and Cheese*
THE SHAPE OF FEAR, in *The Shape of Fear, and Other Ghostly Tales*

PEMBERTON, MAX (1863-)
THE DEVIL'S BOWL AND THE STRANGE AFFAIR AT FONTENAY, in *The Queen of the Jesters*
GOLDEN ASHES, in *Signors of the Night*
PURPLE GLASS, in *The Queen of the Jesters*

PHILLPOTTS, EDEN (1862-)
"ALAS! POOR GHOST," in *Fancy Free*
CHERRY RIPE, in *Striking Hours*
NINE MUSKETEERS, in *Fancy Free*
THREE SHOTS, in *Tales of the Tenements*

PYLE, HOWARD (1853-1911)
THE GHOST OF CAPTAIN BRAND, in *Stolen Treasure*
TOM CHIST AND THE TREASURE BOX, *ibid.*

QUILLER-COUCH, SIR ARTHUR (1863-)
THE DISENCHANTMENT OF 'LISBETH, in *I Saw Three Ships*
PRISONERS OF WAR, in *Old Fires and Profitable Ghosts*
STEPHEN OF STEENS, in *Two Sides of the Face*
WHICH? in *Old Fires and Profitable Ghosts*

RICE, ALICE HEGAN (1870-)
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WILD OATS OF A SPINSTER, *ibid.*

ROBERTS, CHARLES G. D. (1860-)
MISHI OF TIMBERLINE, in *They Who Walk in the Wilds*
ON THE NIGHT TRAIL, in *Haunters of the Silences*
THE WATCHERS OF THE SWAMP, in *Wisdom of the Wilderness*

ROBERTSON, MORGAN (1861-1915)
THE COOK AND THE CAPTAIN, in *Land Ho!*
A CREATURE OF CIRCUMSTANCE, in *Spun-Yarn*
FIFTY FATHOMS DEEP, in *Down to the Sea*
HONOR AMONG THIEVES, in *Spun-Yarn*
MUTINY, in *Down to the Sea*

ROBINS, ELIZABETH (1862-)
BELOW THE SALT, in *Below the Salt; The Fatal Gift of Beauty*
THE FATAL GIFT OF BEAUTY, *ibid.*
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SETON, ERNEST THOMPSON (1860-)
JOHNNY BEAR, in *Lives of the Hunted*
LOBO, THE KING OF CURRUMPAW, in *Wild Animals I Have Known*

SHARP, WILLIAM (pseud., FIONA McLEOD), 1856-1905
CATHAL, in *Sin-eater*
FARA-GHAOL, in *Winged Destiny*

SHERWOOD, MARGARET POLLOCK (1864-)
THE PRINCESS AND THE MICROBE, in *Princess Pourquoi*
PRINCESS POURQUOI, *ibid.*

SLOSSON, ANNIE TRUMBULL (1838-)
ANN MALAN, in *Dumb Foxglove, and Other Stories*
BUTTERNEGGS, in *Seven Dreamers*
DUMB FOXGLOVE, in *Dumb Foxglove, and Other Stories*
FISHIN' JIMMY, in *Seven Dreamers*

SMITH, FRANCIS HOPKINSON (1838-1915)
ABIJAH'S BUBBLE, in *Forty Minutes Late. and Other Stories*
FORTY MINUTES LATE, *ibid.*
MISS MURDOCK—"SPECIAL," in *The Veiled Lady, and Other Men and Women*

STEVENSON, EDWARD I. P. (1868-)
OUT OF THE SUN, in *Her Enemy, Some Friends—and Other Personages*
VIA CRUCIS, *ibid.*

STIMSON, FREDERIC JESUP (1855-)
AN ALABAMA COURTSHIP, in *In the Three Zones*

STUART, RUTH McENERY (1856-1917)
"BLINK," in *The Golden Wedding, and other Tales*
HOLLY AND PIZEN, in *Holly and Pizen, and Other Stories*
MAY BE SO, in *Solomon Crowe's Christmas Pockets*
PETTY LARCENY, in *Aunt Amity's Silver Wedding, and Other Stories*

THANET, OCTAVE (ALICE FRENCH), 1850-
THE FACE OF FAILURE, in *Stories of a Western Town*
THE OGRE OF HA HA BAY, in *Knitters in the Sun*
OTTO THE KNIGHT, in *Otto the Knight, and Other Trans-Mississippi Stories*
THROUGH THE TERRORS OF THE LAW, in *Stories That End Well*

THOMPSON, MAURICE (1844-1901)
THE BALANCE OF POWER, in *Stories of the Cherokee Hills*

THOMPSON, VANCE (1863-1925)
MY LADY GREENSLEEVES, in *The Carnival of Destiny*
THE SOUL OF MESSER GUIDO, *ibid.*

TRACY, VIRGINIA (1874-)
ABOVE RUBIES, in *Merely Players*
PROFESSIONALS, *ibid.*

TRASK, KATE NICHOLS (pseud., KATRINA TRASK), 1853-1922
AFTER A YEAR, in *Lessons in Love*
S. P. Q. R., *ibid.*

TRUMBULL, ANNIE ELIOT (1857-)
POSTLUDE, In *Christmas Accident*
UNEFFECTUAL FIRE, in *Rod's Salvation*

VAN DYKE, HENRY (1852-)
BRAVE HEARTS, in *The Ruling Passion*
THE LOST WORD, in *The Blue Flower*
THE OTHER WISE MAN, *ibid.*

VAN LOAN, CHARLES EMMETT (1876-1919)
CHIVALRY IN CARBON COUNTY, in *Score by Innings*
NINE ASSISTS AND TWO ERRORS, *ibid.*

VIELÉ, HERMAN KNICKERBOCKER (1856-1908)
THE GUEST OF HONOR, in *On the Lightship*
THE INN OF THE SILVER MOON, in *The Inn of the Silver Moon*
THE PRIESTESS OF AMEN RA, in *On the Lightship*

WARMAN, CY (1855-1914)
IN THE HOSPITAL, in *Frontier Stories*
JACK RAMSAY'S REASON, in *The Last Spike*

WATSON, JOHN (pseud., IAN MAC LAREN), 1850-1907
A DOCTOR OF THE OLD SCHOOL, in *Beside the Bonnie Briar Bush*
PAST REDEMPTION, in *Days of Auld Lang Syne*

WELLS, H. G. (HERBERT GEORGE), 1866-
JIMMY GOGGLES THE GOD, in *Twelve Stories and a Dream*
MR. SKELMERSDALE IN FAIRYLAND, *ibid.*

WEYMAN, STANLEY JOHN (1855-1928)
BAB, in *Laid up in Lavender*
IN CUPID'S TOILS, in *The King's Stratagem*

WHARTON, EDITH (1862-)
THE CONFESSIONAL, in *Crucial Instances*
THE DAUNT DIANA, in *Tales of Men and Ghosts*
THE DESCENT OF MAN, in *The Descent of Man, and Other Stories*
FULL CIRCLE, in *Tales of Men and Ghosts*
KERFOL, in *Xingu, and Other Stories*
THE MUSE'S TRAGEDY, in *The Greater Inclination*
THE RECOVERY, in *Crucial Instances*
XINGU, in *Xingu and Other Stories*

WHITE, WILLIAM ALLEN (1868-)
THE HERB CALLED HEART'S-EASE, in *The Court of Boyville*
THE KING OF BOYVILLE, in *The Real Issue*

WIGGIN, KATE DOUGLAS (1856-1923)
THE BIRDS' CHRISTMAS CAROL, in *The Birds' Christmas Carol*
DAUGHTERS OF ZION, in *New Chronicles of Rebecca*
THE STORY OF PATSY, in *The Story of Patsy*

WILLIAMS, JESSE LYNCH (1871-)
THE GIRL AND THE GAME, in *The Girl and the Game, and Other College Stories*
REDDY ARMSTRONG'S REFORMATION, *ibid.*
THE STOLEN STORY, in *The Stolen Story, and Other Newspaper Stories*

WISTER, OWEN (1860-)
EXTRA DRY, in *Members of the Family*
THE GENERAL'S BLUFF, in *Red Men and White*
THE GIFT HORSE, in *Members of the Family*

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NAPOLEON SHAVE-TAIL, in *Jimmyjohn Boss, and Other Stories*

ZANGWILL, ISRAEL (1864-1926)
CHEATING THE GALLOWS, in *The King of Schnorrers*
THE KING OF SCHNORRERS, *ibid.*
A ROSE OF THE GHETTO, *ibid.*
THE SABBATH QUESTION IN SUDMINSTER, in *Ghetto Comedies*
THEY THAT WALK IN DARKNESS, in *They That Walk in Darkness: Ghetto Tragedies*

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ABDULLAH, ACHMED
COBBLER'S WAX, in *The Honorable Gentleman, and Others*
A GESTURE OF NO IMPORTANCE, in *The Swinging Caravan*
A SIMPLE ACT OF PIETY, in *The Honorable Gentleman, and Others*

ALEXANDER, CHARLES
BOBBIE, A GREAT COLLIE, in *Bobbie, a Great Collie*

ANDERSON, SHERWOOD
I WANT TO KNOW WHY, in *The Triumph of the Egg*
MOTHER, in *Winesburg, Ohio*
THE SAD HORN BLOWERS, in *Horses and Men*

AUMONIER, STACY (d. 1928)
THE GOLDEN WINDMILL, in *The Golden Windmill*
THE LANDLORD OF THE LOVE-A-DUCK, in *Love-a-Duck and Other Stories*
LITTLE WHITE FROCK, in *The Golden Windmill*
MISS BRACEGIRDLE DOES HER DUTY, in *Miss Bracegirdle and Others*
ONE SUNDAY MORNING, in *Overhead: Fifteen Tales*
WHERE WAS WYCK STREET, in *Miss Bracegirdle and Others*

BABCOCK, EDWINA
CRUELTIES, in *Best Short Stories of 1918, ed. E. J. O'Brien*
WAVERING GOLD, in *Harper Prize Short Stories*
WILLUM'S VANILLA, in *Best Short Stories of 1919, ed. E. J. O'Brien*

BEACH, REX ELLINGWOOD
CAPTAIN INNOCENCIO, in *The Crimson Gardenia, and Other Tales of Adventure*
THE CRIMSON GARDENIA, *ibid.*
FLESH, in *Laughing Bill Hyde, and Other Stories*

BEER, THOMAS
MUMMERY, in *O. Henry Memorial Prize Stories of 1921*
TACT, in *O. Henry Memorial Prize Stories of 1922*

BENNETT, ARNOLD
THE BURGLARY, in *28 Humorous Stories*, ed. E. Rhys
A LETTER HOME, in *Short Stories*, ed. H. C. Schweikert
THE MATADOR OF THE FIVE TOWNS, in *The Matador of the Five Towns*
MIMI, *ibid.*

BERCOVICI, KONRAD
GHITZA, in *Ghitza, and Other Romances of Gypsy Blood*
MUZIO, in *Iliana*

BLACKMAN, M. C.
HOT COPY, in *O. Henry Memorial Prize Stories of 1928*

BLACKWOOD, ALGERNON
A Case of Eavesdropping, in *The Empty House and Other Ghost Stories*
The Man Who Played upon a Leaf, in *The Lost Valley*
The Terror of the Twins, *ibid.*
The Wendigo, *ibid.*
The Willows, in *The Listener and Other Stories*
The Wings of Horus, in *Day and Night Stories*

BOTTOME, PHYLLIS
The Derelict, in *The Derelict and Other Stories*
The Liqueur Glass, *ibid.*
The Occult, in *Strange Fruit*
The Unpardonable Sin, ibid.

BRADFORD, ROARK
Child of God, in *O. Henry Memorial Prize Stories for 1927*
River Witch, in *O. Henry Memorial Prize Stories for 1928*

BRADY, MARIEL
The Autographt Album, in *Genevieve Gertrude*
Peter Projects, *ibid.*

BRUSH, KATHARINE
The Night Club, in *O. Henry Memorial Prize Stories for 1927*

BUCKLEY, F. R.
The Primitive Method, in *The World's Best Short Stories of 1925,* ed. W. Johnson

BURNET, DANA
Fog, in *The Best Short Stories of 1916,* ed. E. J. O'Brien
Rain, in *The Grim 13,* ed. F. S. Greene

BURKE, THOMAS
The Chink and the Child, in *Limehouse Nights*
Miss Plum Blossom, in *More Limehouse Nights*

BURT, MAXWELL STRUTHERS
Beauty and the Blantons, in *They Could Not Sleep*
The Blood-Red One, in *Chance Encounters*
Each in His Generation, *ibid.*
The Water Hole, in *John O'May, and Other Stories*

BUTLER, ELLIS PARKER
Dog Wanted: Male, in *Real Dogs,* ed. C. W. Gray
The Hard-Boiled Egg, in *Philo Gubb, Correspondence School Detective*
Pigs Is Pigs, in *Pigs Is Pigs*

BYRNE, DONN (d. 1928)
The Barnacle Goose, in *The Changeling*
Reynardine, *ibid.*
The Tale of James Carabine, in *Destiny Bay*
The Tale of My Uncle Cosimo and the Fair Girl of Wu, *ibid.*
Triangle, in *"Dawgs!"* ed. C. W. Gray

CABELL, JAMES BRANCH
The Episode Called The Castle of Content, in *The Line of Love*
The Episode Called In Necessity's Mortar, *ibid.*
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CAMERON, MARGARET (MRS. H. C. LEWIS)
The Dollivers Dine Out, in *The Golden Rule Dollivers*
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CARVER, ADA JACK
REDBONE, in *Harper Prize Stories; O. Henry Memorial Prize Stories of 1925*
THE SINGING WOMAN, in *O. Henry Memorial Prize Stories of 1927*
TREESHY, in *O. Henry Memorial Prize Stories of 1926*

CATHER, WILLA SIBERT
DEATH IN THE DESERT, in *The Troll Garden*
THE GOLD SLIPPER, in *Youth and the Bright Medusa*
THE SCULPTOR'S FUNERAL, *ibid.*

CHESTERTON, GILBERT KEITH
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